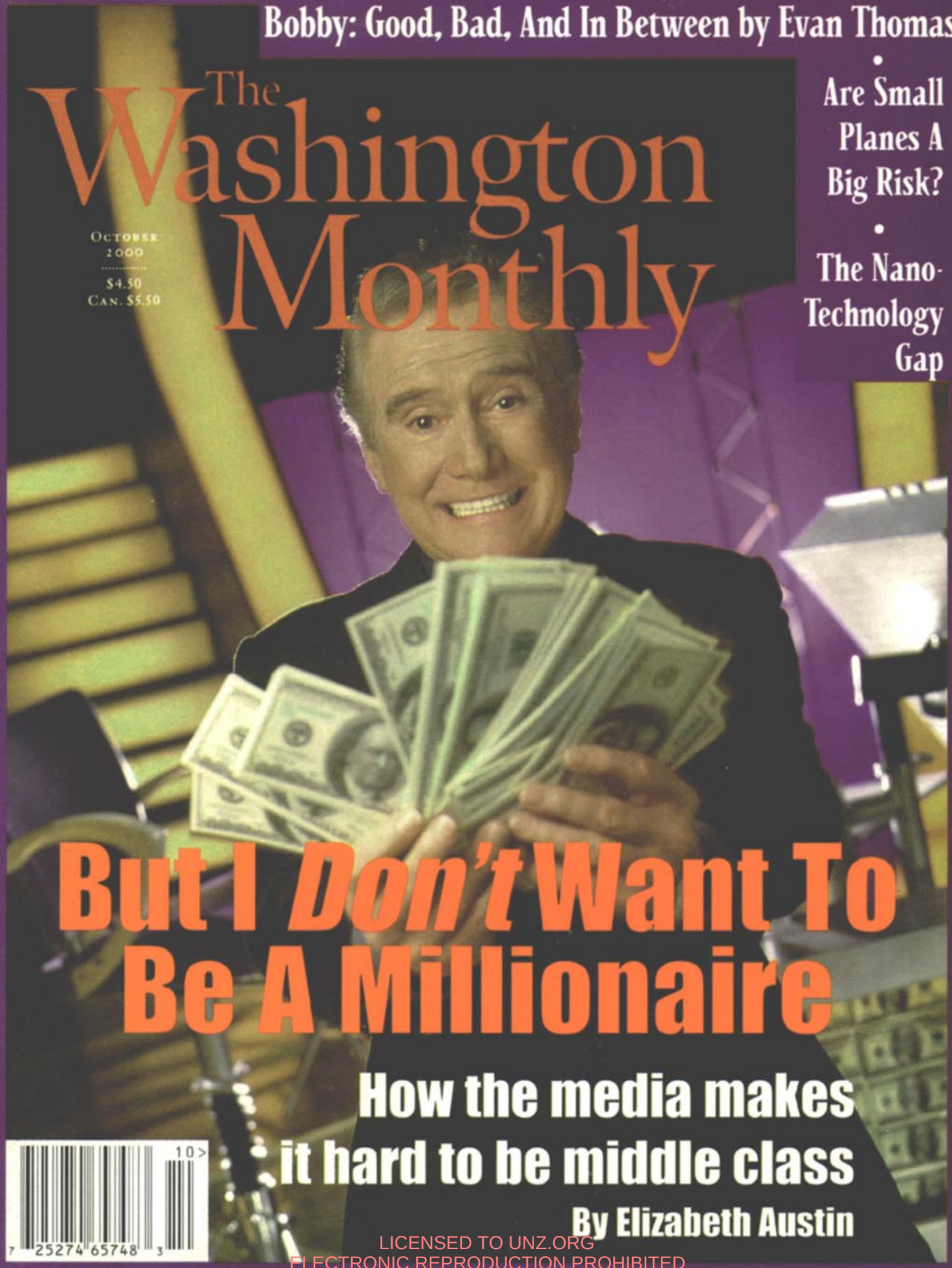
Bobby: Good, Bad, And In Between by Evan Thomas

# The Washington Monthly

October 2000
$4.50
Can. $5.50

Are Small Planes A Big Risk?

The Nano-Technology Gap



# But I *Don't* Want To Be A Millionaire

## How the media makes it hard to be middle class

By Elizabeth Austin

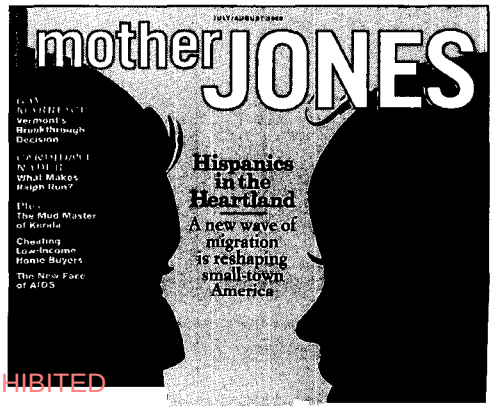
10>
7 25274 65748 3

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MOTHER JONES

**CRAZY PRICE - JUST $10 A YEAR**

Here at *Mother Jones* we've earned a reputation for hard-hitting investigative journalism that makes you think. And makes you laugh. Because if we're going to hit you where you live, we'd better maintain a healthy sense of humor. Now you can introduce yourself to *Mother Jones* for the crazy rate of just $10 per year - six chunky, feisty, hard-to-put-down issues for less than the price of a pizza. What are you waiting for? It's risk free: money back if you're not satisfied. **www.motherjones.com**




**SUBSCRIBE TO A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW. CALL 1-800-GET-MOJO.**

Please refer to promotion code A090W4

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents
Volume 32, Number 10 • October 2000
The Washington Monthly

## Features

**4** **TILTING AT WINDMILLS**
A Dirty Tricks Primer ... The Summer of 1940 ... When Conventions Counted ... Five Star Toilets ... The Hitoku Department ... Camelot's Outsider ... Milwaukee's Finest.
BY CHARLES PETERS

**8** **Flying Too High**
A year after JFK Jr.'s crash, general aviation still enjoys stout subsidies and unsupervised skies
BY STEPHEN POMPER

**Robert Francis Kennedy**

**14** **Clarity Through Complexity**
BY HARRIS WOFFORD

**16** **Bobby: Good, Bad, And In Between**
The many incarnations of Robert Kennedy
BY EVAN THOMAS

**25** **Downsizing**
Nanotechnology—Why you should sweat the small stuff
BY NICHOLAS THOMPSON

**Cover Story**

**30** **Why Homer's My Hero**
The All-American family shouldn't have to wear Gucci to feel good
BY ELIZABETH AUSTIN

**36** **The Green Monster**
How rich sports makes poor sports
BY JONATHAN ROWE

**41** **The Son Also Rises**
From Caney Fork to Capitol Hill, Al Gore has never stopped striving
BY JON MEACHAM

**45** **It Takes Two**
Tipper and Laura aren't Hillary, and why that's good for Al and W.
BY ELEANOR CLIFT

## Political Booknotes

**50** **Reversing Reagan**
MICHAEL WALDMAN reviews MATTHEW DALLEK's *The Right Moment*

**Curious Ron**
TIMOTHY NOAH reviews RON ROSENBAUM's *The Secret Parts of Fortune*

**From Russia With Loot**
ANDREW COCKBURN reviews PAUL KLEBIKOV AND DRENKA WILLEN'S *Godfather of the Kremlin*

**Peace Not Perfection**
JOHN MARKS reviews GARY JONATHAN BASS' *Stay the Hand of Vengeance*

**Of Moose And Men**
DANIEL AKST reviews DAVID T. BEITO's *From Mutual Aid to the Welfare State*

**The Secret Sharer**
WALTER PINCUS reviews CRAIG EISENDRATH'S *National Insecurity*

**Adam's Eden**
ALEXANDRA STARR reviews ADAM GOPNIK'S *From Paris to the Moon*

## Departments

**2** Letters
**23** Monthly Journalism Award
**24** Memo of the Month
**46** Who's Who
**55** Tidbits & Outrages



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Letters

## No Strife At *U.S News*

I would like to challenge some unnamed sources cited by writer Nicholas Thompson in his story entitled "Playing With Numbers" (September 2000). In his critical assessment of the university and college rankings process at *U.S. News & World Report*, Mr. Thompson wrote: "according to sources close to the magazine, a bitter internal struggle broke out when it became clear that Caltech was going to come out on top in the late spring of 1999" instead of Ivy League schools that had held the top rankings positions in previous years.

I was the special projects editor at *U.S. News* at the time and oversaw the rankings.

It is true that a change in the rankings methodology gave more weight to the fact that per-student spending at Caltech was vastly higher than at other schools and which resulted in Caltech becoming the number one school in the rankings done in 1999. But at no point was there any discussion of reworking the data or changing the rankings.

At the time the methodolgy was changed, no one knew which school would come out on top. It's accurate to say that some editors, including me, were surprised at the result. There were a number of questions asked by editors about the change in methodolgy—why it was done and the technical details of how it was done. However, no editor or writer raised the possibility of redoing the rankings. In fact, the magazine's topmost editor, Stephen Smith, immediately and unhesitatingly made clear from the moment that he heard about the new rankings that they would stand and the publication of them would proceed on schedule.

Perhaps these sources heard about other meetings that were held after the rankings emerged. Those meetings dealt with how we should cover the Caltech story. Those were the only "deliberations" related to those new rankings. And they were as civil as these sessions ever get.

HARRISON RAINIE
FORMER SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR
*U.S. News & World Report*

*Mr. Thompson replies:*

*Many of the people I spoke with do work, or have worked, for* U.S. News *and did not want their names used. I stand by my reporting and my story absolutely.*

## More Drug Problems

Although Stephen Pomper raises many significant policy issues concerning the nation's prescription drug review and safety monitoring process ("Drug Rush," May 2000), several of his basic premises are seriously flawed.

• Pomper seems to assume that there is such a thing as absolute safety, when in fact all prescription and over-the-counter drugs are inherently risky. "Safety" does not mean zero risk; instead it means that the benefits of a product outweigh the risks.

• He assumes, again incorrectly, that faster drug reviews automatically mean more "unsafe" products are reaching American patients. The evidence does not support this contention. In fact, several of the drugs withdrawn in the past three years were approved well before the user fee program took effect in 1992.

Pomper is on firmer ground when he discusses the FDA's system for capturing and monitoring adverse events for drugs once they have reached the market. Although it has been updated, the monitoring system requires a significant infusion of resources to make it stronger.

For the past three years FDA budget requests submitted to Congress have sought funds for the initial investments needed to enhance this system. For two years these requests have not been funded. We remain hopeful that funding will be provided for FY 2001.

JANE E. HENNEY, M.D.
COMMISSIONER OF FOOD AND DRUGS

*Mr. Pomper replies:*

*I am puzzled by the commissioner's criticism of my "basic premises" because the article does not make either assumption that Dr. Henney purports to rebut. It does, however, make the point that faster drug approvals, an increased participation of the pharmaceutical industry in the approval process, and the loosening of restrictions on prescription drug marketing all combine to make better safety monitoring critically important once prescription drugs reach the market.*

## Play Ball

Just got your latest issue and am glad to respond to your query about Ebbets Field ("Tilting at Windmills," September 2000), which indeed was named after its owner, Charlie Ebbets, at the time of its opening in 1913.

But Ebbets, Wrigley, and Crosley were by no means the only owners who had their stadiums named for them. Wrigley Field, for one, was originally called Weeghman Field (or Weeghman Park; I'm not sure which), after the owner of the Federal League Chicago Whales. When the league folded after the 1915 season, the National League Cubs moved into it, but kept the name of the park unchanged until 1919, when the gum magnate William Wrigley took over full ownership of the team and renamed the park after himself.

For what it's worth, here's a list of all the parks I can think of which were named after their owners: Shibe Park in Philadelphia (re-named Connie Mack Stadium only after Mack died); Navin Field in Detroit, later Briggs Stadium, both named after Tigers' owners; Griffith Stadium in Washington; Comiskey Park in Chicago (temporarily known as White Sox Park at a later date, but re-named Comiskey Park); Busch Stadium in St. Louis (both the old Sportsman's Park re-named Busch Stadium when Gussie Busch bought the team in 1953, and the new stadium built in 1966); Jacobs Field in Cleveland (built in 1994); Turner Field in Atlanta; and Coors Field in Denver, which you can say was either named after the beer company or its owner, Joseph Coors.

ANDY MOURSUND
*Kensington, Md.*


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## Not Bush-Dependent

Walter Shapiro purportedly reviewed my new book, *Compassionate Conservatism*, in your June issue. I've never publicly protested book reviews, which are matters of opinion. But Mr. Shapiro primarily reviewed not my book but my life, in the process performing astounding mind-reading feats without ever having interviewed me or (as far as I know) even having met me. I supposedly "crave" attention. I supposedly wrote this book because I was "nervous" about hostile press coverage. Etc.

I'm not hard to reach, but if Mr. Shapiro had called, facts might have gotten in his way. *Compassionate Conservatism* was finished before the hostile press coverage emerged. I wasn't doing or planning any travel to provide background material for a Bush speech. I've been writing about and participating in poverty-fighting activity for two decades now, so my interest in the subject does not depend on the Bush campaign or anything else in politics.

MARVIN OLASKY
*Senior Fellow, Acton Institute*
*Austin, Texas*

*Mr. Shapiro replies:*

*No need to get out the bright lights and the rubber hoses. I confess. I violated what Marvin Olasky regards as the cardinal rule of book reviewing: I didn't call the author for an interview.*

*Of course, I took some liberties in imagining Mr. Olasky's state of mind. But it should have been apparent to everyone—save perhaps a thin-skinned author—that this was fair comment and not advertised as reportage. To underline my satiric intent, I used the second-person singular form so that my speculations would not read like standard assertions of fact.*

*Why did I go to all this trouble? Because I had respected Mr. Olasky as a writer and a social-policy theorist (although we do not share ideological outlooks), and I couldn't understand how he could have written such a slapdash book. So to reconcile this contradiction, I seized upon what I considered the most plausible explanation for Mr. Olasky's superficial gloss on the political philosophy that he helped popularize and shape. If I was wrong about his writing in haste in response to political ambition, then I remain baffled why Mr. Olasky believed this book was ready for publication.*

## Dyslexic Postal Machines

In your July/August 2000 issue you asked someone to explain the mail misdelivery you wrote about ("Tilting at Windmills").

The post office now uses machines to sort the mail in delivery sequence. These are DPS (Delivery Post Sequence) machines. The letter carrier takes this mail directly to the street and does not touch it until delivery. The machine misread the letter for two reasons: 1) It read both the 5025 of the street address and 2) the last three digits of the zip code of 007.

Unfortunately, the letter carrier did not catch this before the delivery of that piece of mail. A human mistake, which caused further delay in the correct delivery. This is one of the reasons it takes a letter days to go across town. Sometimes it goes across the country before returning to the original address for correct delivery.

The DPS machine can confuse numbers that are similar. For example, a 7 and 9, a 3 and 8, a 2 and 7. The high rate of speed the letters go through the machine (30,000 per hour), the type of print, color of the envelope, window pane, etc. can affect delivery. Have you noticed that the red and green Christmas card envelopes are slowly becoming a thing of the past? The DPS machine has trouble reading a dark background like this. I'm a letter carrier with over 18 years of service.

BEN GRACE
*Fort Worth, Texas*

### Correction

*In our September 2000 issue, we misidentified James K. Galbraith in his author biography. He is a professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School at the University of Texas, and his most recent book is* Created Unequal: The Crisis in American Pay.


The Washington Monthly

**Editor in Chief** Charles Peters
**Publisher** Tara Mansbridge
**Editors** Stephen Pomper, Nicholas Thompson
**Contributing Editors** Jonathan Alter, Thomas N. Bethell, Tom Bethell, Katherine Boo, Taylor Branch, Matthew Cooper, Michelle Cottle, Gregg Easterbrook, James Fallows, Paul Glastris, Mickey Kaus, Phil Keisling, Michael Kinsley, Nicholas Lemann, Suzannah Lessard, Arthur Levine, Jon Meacham, Matthew Miller, Timothy Noah, Joseph Nocera, Leonard Reed, John Rothchild, Jonathan Rowe, David Segal, Walter Shapiro, Joshua Wolf Shenk, Scott Shuger, Steven Waldman, Robert Worth
**Editorial Advisory Board** Charles W. Bailey, Russell Baker, James David Barber, Edgar Cahn, David Halberstam, Richard Reeves, Hugh Sidey
**Copy Editor** Timothy Dickinson
**Director of Advertising & Publicity** Patricia Simon
**Assistant to the Editor in Chief** Susan Buzzelli
**Interns** Susan Buzzelli, Joe Dempsey, Jennifer Duhoski, Christina Larson, Sonia Sharigian

Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions: one year, $44.95; two years, $79.95; three years, $109.95. For Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add $10 for surface delivery; air mail delivery add $32. Back issues, $5. Send correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and address changes to 1611 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009. For address changes, provide six weeks' notice and include old address label. Send subscription complaints to Charles Peters, *The Washington Monthly*, 1611 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009. *The Washington Monthly* is indexed in the Book Review Index, Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, and Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory and may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. For reprint rights call Tara Mansbridge at (202) 462-0128. Published monthly except combined Jan./Feb. and July/Aug. issues by The Washington Monthly Co., 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Printed in U.S.A.


© 2000 The Washington Monthly Co. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is prohibited.


ISSN 0043-0633. Postmaster: Send change of address to *The Washington Monthly*, 1611 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C. and at additional mailing offices. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Send manuscripts and letters to: Editors, 1611 Connecticut Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20009 or e-mail to: **editors@washingtonmonthly.com.**





LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

*A Dirty Tricks Primer • The Summer of 1940 • When Conventions Counted*

*Five Star Toilets • The Hitoku Department • Camelot's Outsider • Milwaukee's Finest*

"WHERE IS THE NEAREST PUBLIC toilet?" is a question that every tourist has to ask sooner or later and sometimes with embarrassing urgency. I'm happy to report that help is at hand. A woman named Mary Ann Racin has established a Web site called thebathroomdiaries.com that will give you the skinny on where to find tourist-friendly toilets, whether you're going to Paris, Venice, Bangkok, or Chicago.

My wife, Beth, is also a serious student of toilets, although her field of concentration is somewhat narrower than Ms. Racin's. Beth's specialty is ritzy hotels. She long ago learned that, as the wife of an impecunious editor, she is unlikely to enter these establishments as a paying customer. But she discovered that she can use the facilities for free and afterwards soak up the privileged atmosphere as she saunters through the lobby. So before you take your next trip, give Beth a call, and she'll make sure that, if you have to go, you'll go in style.

••••••••

THE CONVENTIONS THIS YEAR were, except for a few good speeches, boring to almost everyone but relatives of people on the podium. They made me yearn for the time when conventions meant something. The last close race was between Reagan and Ford in 1976. Before that you had to go back to the Kennedy-Kefauver contest for the vice-presidency in 1956, and Taft and Eisenhower in 1952. There was a close vote between Harry Truman and Henry Wallace for the vice-presidential nomination in 1944. If Sam Rayburn hadn't arbitrarily adjourned the convention (against a chorus of "no's" from the delegates) after the first ballot, Wallace would probably have won, which just proves that Mr. Sam knew when to be arbitrary, because Henry Wallace would have been a disaster as president.

But the most exciting convention in my lifetime was held by the Republicans in 1940 in Philadelphia. Taft and Dewey were the main candidates and Arthur Vandenberg was the other candidate of party regulars. Wendell Willkie was the only clear internationalist in the field. The other three were at that time relatively isolationist. This was important because the crucial issue that summer was aid to Britain. France had fallen just before the convention began. Britain stood alone against Hitler. Roosevelt wanted to help England, but since America was just beginning to emerge from a long period in which isolationism was definitely dominant, any pro-British steps he took were politically dangerous, particularly since this was an election year.

**Like a good many conservatives, Cheney is charitable close up but harsh when it comes to public policy.**

So everyone, including me at age 13, who felt that the future of the world hung on our getting help to Britain, was desperately rooting for Willkie. There were enough of us to pack the galleries at the Philadelphia Convention Hall, chanting "We Want Willkie, We Want Willkie!" I was back home listening to the radio and rooting as intensely as I did for my favorite baseball team. On the first ballot Dewey, Taft, and Vandenberg got 625 votes to Willkie's 105. But he began to climb steadily until he was finally nominated on the fourth or fifth ballot. It was not only hugely exciting but it changed history. Roosevelt was able to risk sending guns to help rearm the soldiers who left theirs behind on the beaches of Dunkirk but more important he was able to send the British 50 destroyers desperately needed if the Royal Navy was to repel a Nazi invasion. Just a couple of weeks after the first of those destroyers sailed, Hitler decided to postpone the invasion indefinitely.

••••••••

SOMETHING ELSE FDR did that summer of 1940 that it is hard to imagine his doing without Willkie was to propose a military draft. This country had never had conscription when it was not at war. Here again the fact that 1940 was an election year magnified the political risk.

The good guys of this period have to include the media mogul Henry Luce. His publications, *Time* and *Life*, were at the height of their power, and Luce used that power to help mobilize support for the draft, aid to Britain, and for Wendell Willkie. Luce, a complex and difficult man, was far from being always right, but that summer he was absolutely right on the issues that counted most.

••••••••

FOR ME THAT SUMMER OF 1940 compares to no other period in my life except the Cuban Missile Crisis. These were the two moments when the future of the country and much of the world hung in the balance.

The heroes of the missile crisis were John and Robert Kennedy, as



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Harris Wofford recounts in his review in this issue of Evan Thomas' new book, *Robert Kennedy: A Life*. It still seems almost miraculous that the two of them found the courage to stand up to the majority of their advisors who favored an invasion or air attacks that would have produced nuclear war. One of their hawkish advisors, Dean Acheson, stood head and shoulders above the Democratic party's foreign policy elite. His scorn was withering. And one of Jack's weaknesses was a tendency to defer to sophisticated establishmentarians like Acheson. This may be why Bobby was so vital at this moment. He was much more likely to consider himself an outsider with little reason to defer to the insider. And, of course, Jack had learned from the Bay of Pigs that the insiders could lead him astray. So this time he was ready to join Bobby in questioning them.

Incidentally, Wofford was himself a participant in a story that showed both Bobby Kennedy's noble and less noble sides. During the 1960 campaign it was Harris who persuaded Bobby to call the judge who was holding Martin Luther King in jail and persuade the judge to release King. But after doing the right thing, Bobby got mad at Harris because Bobby worried that the gesture—along with JFK's call to King's father, also instigated by Wofford—would lose the South.

••••••••

A FEW YEARS BACK WE NOTED that one explanation for the increasing conservatism of the judiciary is the brainwashing that judges get at conferences put on by conservative foundations and held at plush resorts where the judges are wined and dined when they aren't on the golf course or in the conference room. Now comes Joe Stephens of *The Washington Post* to report that, not only are the judges still going to the conferences, they have failed to report more than a dozen resort trips on their annual financial report as required by federal ethics laws. Why do the judges take these trips and what do they learn? "They're in nice places," Federal District Court Judge John F. Rhoades explained. "I learned a lot. Like, if you build a car and make it absolutely safe, can anybody afford to buy it? Stuff like that."

••••••••

I ADMIRED THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL selections of both candidates. I think they each picked the man they sincerely thought was the best of the contenders. And I could easily imagine Joe Lieberman as a very good president. I've admired Dick Cheney as White House Chief of Staff and Secretary of Defense. But I don' t want him as president because I think he's wrong on too many important issues. As a Congressman he voted against Head Start, the Clean Water Act, the school lunch program, and health insurance for people who lose their jobs.

Another of the issues I disagree with Cheney on has been gays in the military. He has not been sympathetic to their cause. Yet he has a gay daughter, Mary, and openly supported a gay man, Pete Williams, on his staff at the Pentagon when he was Secretary of Defense. Still Dick Cheney is running on a platform that says "homosexuality is incompatible with military service." Like a good many conservatives I know, Cheney is charitable when it's close up and personal but harsh when it comes to public policy.

••••••••

OF THE FIRST 830 COMPLAINTS of taxpayer harassment filed under the law passed by Congress when the IRS was being accused of bullying taxpayers, none has been upheld. Instead, the new law has resulted in what David Cay Johnston of *The New York Times* describes as "extreme caution by IRS workers, especially those involved in sensitive audits and collections against those who owe taxes past due. Collections have grown so lax," continues Johnston, "that some prominent tax advisers said in interviews last year that they were amazed that the IRS was not trying to collect taxes owed by their clients."

••••••••

ON ANOTHER MATTER INVOLVING gays, the Boy Scouts, I find myself understanding the conservatives. If you've known many gay men, as I have, you know that some of them are powerfully attracted to boys. So I can see why the Scouts don't want to have to wait until it's too late to discover that one of their scoutmasters has a man-boy inclination that cannot be controlled. I can also see why a gay who does not have this tendency would be outraged at being denied the opportunity to serve. The scouts would lose by not letting him serve. So it's a tough problem. I lean toward letting the gays serve, but I do feel that, unlike the case of the military, the conservatives have a legitimate point.

••••••••

PRIVATE PLANES POSE A SAFETY threat that few people are aware of. To give you a sense of the dimensions of the danger, consider that the Firestone tires that prompted the biggest safety scandal of the year caused 103 fatalities in all. As Stephen Pomper reports in an article on page 8 of this issue, private plane crashes caused 628 in just one year.

••••••••

ALTHOUGH I'M A LIBERAL ON most issues, there are a few where I tend to be on the conservative side. One of these has long been violent crime. What happened in the case of the murder of Jimmy Cottingham explains why. There were witnesses. One, to whom the alleged killer, Vincent Haron Hunnicutt, had confessed the murder, did not come forward until seven months afterwards because, according to Arthur Santana of *The Washington Post*, "of fear and finally did so reluctantly."

When Hunnicutt was charged with the murder, the U.S. Attorney's office recommended he be held in jail pending trial. But Judge Patricia



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wynn released him to a halfway house for three weeks and then to live with his grandmother until trial. Now stop and think about the frightened witness. "Why," he must be asking himself, "did I ever come forward? There's a good chance I'll be killed. Maybe I better get out of town. Or maybe I better recant."

An auditor's report in 1999 found that D.C. halfway houses have "insufficient staff, inadequately trained employees, and few sanctions for escapees." Among the report's recommendations was that "defendants accused of violent crimes not be placed in halfway houses."

Of course, after three weeks Hunnicutt won't have to endure even this lax supervision. He will be free to go to his grandmother's where the only conditions will be "that he checks in periodically and be tested occasionally for drugs." Suppose he fails to check in? Once, nothing will be done. Twice, nothing will be done. He has to violate the conditions of his release three times before he will be jailed.

••••••••

On September 3, The New *York Times* front page had an article on the shortage of public school principals. The solution to the problem comes curiously enough in another *Times* article, this from the June 8 edition, explaining how "leaders from other professions reshape America's schools from top to bottom." The article focused on how top lawyers like Harold Levy and Alan Bersin had moved into jobs running public school systems. But there are thousands of other unhappy lawyers who would find a principal's job more interesting and worthwhile than killing themselves doing dull work for soulless corporations. Every smart person who is miserable in his current job should consider going into public education either as a teacher or a principal. Those who have the aptitude will find the immense satisfaction of using their skill on the front lines of a crucial struggle. "Urban education is the equivalent of the civil rights movement of the '50s" was the outquote in the June 6 story and it happens to be true.

**Every smart person who is miserable in his current job should consider going into public education.**

••••••••

It does appear that those lawyers are having less and less chance to do good at their firms. "Many of the nation's biggest law firms," according to another recent *Times* article, this one by Greg Winter, "have cut back on pro bono work so sharply that they fall far below professional guidelines for representing people who cannot afford to pay." And it should be noted that those guidelines are less than demanding—just 50 hours a year. But at 142 firms surveyed by the District of Columbia Circuit Court, less than 25 percent of the lawyers spent even that much representing needy clients. One factor in the decrease in pro bono hours, according to reporter Winter, is that firms have "to raise billable hours to pay escalating salaries." In other words the lawyers' own greed causes the pro bono problem.

••••••••

Norman Mailer recently wrote in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review* that John Dos Passos' *USA* "had the largest influence on me of any novel I read while I was in college." The late Mary McCarthy said the same thing before she died. And I know the book had a great impact on many others who came of age in the '30s and '40s, including me. Experience gives us our measuring rod of truth, and the vicarious experience of the novel, to the extent the writer convinces us he's accurately describing reality, becomes part of our equipment for sniffing out what's real and true and distinguishing it from the phoney. Dos Passos taught my generation where to sniff.

But he was at least partly wrong in teaching us to be socialists. Socialism as a means of running industry has mostly been a failure. But there's still much to say on behalf of a socialist approach to medical care and education as I will try to explain later in this column.

••••••••

If you have the slightest illusion that the Firestone cover-up is unique, consider that on August 22, Mitsubishi admitted that it had, in the words of Miki Tanikawa of *The New York Times*, "systematically concealed customer complaints about tens of thousands of defective automobiles since 1977." The problem included faulty fuel tanks, clutches, crankshafts, and brakes. The defects were repaired but the customer complaints were initialed "H" for "hitoku" which means conceal. "None," writes Tanikawa, "were reported to the government."

••••••••

Why wasn't the National Highway Transportation Safety Agency on top of the current Firestone crisis as it was on a similar Firestone problem in 1978? Back then Jimmy Carter was president and Joan Claybrook, a Nader protégé, was the agency's administrator. In 1981, Ronald Reagan took office with his anti-regulatory guns blazing. The NHTSA budget was cut by 49 percent and, according to John Martin of ABC News, Republican congresses have continued to sabotage the agency. It has only 42 employees, just 15 to 20 of whom are investigators. Congress blocked its attempt to reduce the number of hours truck drivers drive without rest. And when it attempted to publish the rollover ratings for the benefit of new vehicle buyers, Congress again said no.

••••••••

Dr. Rene Favaloro ran a heart clinic in Argentina that treated the



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rich and poor alike. He proved that high-quality medicine could be practiced on a socialized basis. In fact his clinic, according to Anthony Faiola of *The Washington Post*, "quickly became Latin America's most advanced and modern heart institute, conducting ground-breaking research as well as sophisticated organ transplants and coronary surgeries." But his inspiring story had an unhappy ending. As Argentina's health care system became increasingly troubled in the '90s, it laid ever-increasing numbers of its patients on Dr. Favaloro's clinic. The percentage of needy patients rose from a fair share to a grossly unfair burden. No one would help him meet the costs. He despaired and committed suicide.

But the lesson of what he accomplished shouldn't be lost. Innovative, high-quality medicine can be practiced in a clinic that can care for the rich and poor alike.

Earlier in his career, Dr. Favaloro had worked at the Cleveland Clinic, where, as I pointed out a few months ago, physicians are paid a salary and do not know if the patient they're treating is rich or poor. And the clinic is justly renowned for the excellence of the care it provides.

In that column I quoted the Cleveland Clinic's Dr. Toby Cosgrove. A few days after the issue came out, David Halberstam, a member of our editorial board, called and said "Toby is a friend of mine. Did you know he was a military doctor in Vietnam?" The reason Halberstam knew that would grab my attention is because Vietnam offers more proof that good innovative medicine and socialized medicine are not inconsistent. It was in Vietnam that drafted doctors, working under a socialized system and being paid salaries instead of fees, made incredible advances in emergency medicine. And they never knew whether their patient was rich or poor.

I called Dr. Cosgrove and asked him about Rene Favaloro. He said Favaloro's surgical innovations were "of Nobel quality" and "if he had chosen private practice, he would have been a very wealthy man."

•••••••

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL recently devoted four columns at the top of the editorial page to an article by Ralph Nader. At first I was astonished that the conservative editors of the *Journal* would give this space to the very liberal Nader. Then I thought, of course, the conservatives want to help Nader because a vote for him is a vote taken away from Gore. That thought inspired another. If the Republicans have a dirty-tricks department, it will certainly be trying to advance Nader's candidacy, including steering contributions his way. I hope some enterprising reporter will take a good look at the sources of Nader's money to see if this actually happens.

The other area with rich dirty-trick potential for the GOP is the cost of energy. If oil prices continue to escalate, it could be blamed on Clinton and Gore. And no one knows better the people who can keep the prices going up—the oil companies and the Saudis—than Dick Cheney.

The position taken by Nader in his *Journal* op-ed is that he should be part of the presidential debates. This has also been the position taken by TomPaine.com in one of its op-ed ads in *The New York Times*. As a longtime admirer of Nader's and a board member of TomPaine.com, I regret to say they are both wrong. Only Al Gore or George W. Bush is going to win this election and we need to use the debates to find out everything we can about them.

•••••••

MORE EVIDENCE THAT SOCIALISM can work comes from the military's child-care program. In the '80s it was a mess, writes Jacqueline L. Salmon of *The Washington Post*. Today, she reports, "the picture is dramatically different." The military is held up as an example of what the rest of the country should do. It provides quality care to 200,000 children at a cost to military personnel 25 percent less on average than civilians pay.

But what the story also illustrates is that socialism doesn't automatically work. Military day care was a mess. It only got better because a lot of people paid attention to what needed to be fixed.

•••••••

SIXTY-SEVEN YEARS AFTER Hanby Banning was murdered in Milwaukee, the local police solved the crime. Amazing, you say. But there's more. According to a report filed by the department last summer, six other homicides that occurred between 1932 and 1962 had just been solved. This remarkable accomplishment aroused the curiosity of Cary Spivak and Dan Bice of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. What they found was that the city's police have a goal of solving 80 percent of homicides. If current cases are proving hard to crack, they dust off the files of crimes committed long ago and check to see if the leading suspect has died. If he has, the crime is solved and, most important of all, the 80 percent goal is met.

•••••••

I WAS TOUCHED BY A RECENT photograph of a group of Jewish seniors joyfully greeting Joe Lieberman. I understand the pride they feel. I remember in the West Virginia primary in 1960, the state's population was only about four percent Catholic. But it seemed like we had every last one of them working as a volunteer for Jack Kennedy. Like the Jews, the Catholics had been the victims of prejudice and disdain and were thrilled to see one of their own recognized as a national candidate. The work those volunteers did has long been an unacknowledged factor in our victory. Joe Lieberman can inspire similar ardor. But he must remember one thing: Catholics loved Kennedy because he made them proud. So Joe Lieberman must continue to make Jews proud. The betting here is that he will make all of us proud. ●



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Flying Too High

*A year after JFK Jr.'s crash, general aviation still enjoys stout subsidies and unsupervised skies*

## By Stephen Pomper

When John F. Kennedy, Jr. spiralled into the North Atlantic last year, there was some surprise in the press and public that he was allowed to go up into the moonless haze without the instrument training that might have allowed him to save himself and the unfortunate Bessette sisters. But the world of private flying is full of these kinds of surprises. It's the Wild Wild West meets Sherwood Forest stood on its head. Private flyers are regulated in theory, but hardly supervised in practice. This generally well-heeled group benefits from a hidden subsidy that gets funded out of commercial passengers' generally less deep pockets. And watching over this unsupervised, subsidized state of grace is one of Washington's most surprisingly powerful lobbies.

This is probably not news to you if you're already a member of the private plane community—known as general aviation, or simply "GA," in the trade. You've no doubt discovered that if you own your own plane (or can get ahold of the keys to someone else's) you can swagger through any GA facility anywhere in the country without anybody checking to see whether you have just consumed a pint of bourbon or three sheets of blotter acid, are carrying a neutron bomb under your arm, or haven't had your certification renewed since the Eisenhower administration. You need not file a flight plan (Kennedy didn't) unless you plan to cruise up high with the big jets. Even if you're not licensed to carry passengers for hire, nobody will check whether those guys getting in back are joy-riders, paying businessmen who want to beat the traffic into O'Hare, or a team of Libyan terrorists who are using you as their getaway car. No airborne cop is going to pull you over and question whether you've had one beer too many. You are—for all practical purposes—free from adult supervision.

Certainly, a fair amount of freedom is justified by the statistics; for example, the National Transportation Safety Board reports that in 1999 only about one percent of GA fatalities were alcohol related (an astonishingly low number given the 38 percent of road fatalities that were related to alcohol in 1998). Still, there is evidence to suggest that laissez faire is not always the best policy. Kennedy's ill-fated flight is a good example. So is last November's crash of a single engine aircraft into a Kentucky Fried Chicken in Newark, New Jersey. The incident claimed four lives, injured 25, and caused more than $1 million in property damage—and was all the more tragic because the pilot had taken a migraine painkiller called Fiorinal that should have kept him grounded. Then, two more crashes over ultra-populous New Jersey added reason for concern: In December a single-engine craft tumbled into a residential neighborhood in Hasbrouck Heights. And in August of this year, a single engine plane collided with a military charter over Burlington Township, killing 11 and destroying a couple's home in the process. Peering through the wreckage one can understand why Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) has asked the FAA to consider whether a little more air traffic control on small planes flying over densely populated areas might make sense.

Although Lautenberg has a point, don't hold your breath waiting for big changes. Legal and policy shifts that GA don't want—safety regulations that might pin back their wings, and financial reforms that might trim back their subsidy—tend to happen over geologic time. For this, the GA set can thank a Frederick, Maryland lobbying group called the Airline Owners and Pilots Association—an organization that is so dogged, so effective, and so narrowly focused on its own agenda that it once earned the nickname "the NRA of the air."


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## Meet AOPA

Here's a question: If you're a lobby, and somebody compares you to the NRA, do you treat that as a good thing or a bad thing? Phil Boyer, the president of the AOPA, pauses a bit to reflect. There was a time, he points out, when the NRA's methods were tremendously effective and the analogy could only be perceived as a "huge compliment." Yes, AOPA could be obnoxious—Boyer's predecessor John L. Baker once bragged to *The Washington Post* that "We have the muscle to back up what we say. We're not go along to get along." But they sure got the job done—suing, bluffing, and stalling their way through a series of campaigns to keep major airports open to smaller craft and keep the government out of the little guy's cockpit. Bullyboy tactics haven't fared as well in recent years, however, and Boyer himself prefers a less antagonistic style. "I never found you got a lot done by shaking your fist all the time," he says, clenching one and waving it across the conference table at the back of his office. Instead, his preference has been "to negotiate with an open hand." Out comes an open palm, extended like a church greeter's on Easter morning.

But watch out for that hand—Boyer's methods may be different than from his predecessor's but his objectives are awfully similar. *U.S. News & World Report* noted that the day after the Coast Guard pulled the wreckage of Kennedy's plane out of the drink, Boyer was on Capitol Hill waving around a chart announcing that: "JUDGMENT CANNOT BE LEGISLATED." Reading between the lines, any legislator could have made out the message "LEAVE US ALONE." And when a lobbyist with 350,000 highly affluent, highly vocal, highly organized members makes a statement like that, you can bet that even the non-pilots on the Hill listen.

To be fair, there is something to the "leave us alone" approach. After all, the government can't be in the business of managing all of life's risks. We don't expect tree climbing, garlic chopping, or running on the pool deck to be dealt with in the Code of Federal Regulations, and these can all be plenty risky if approached with the wrong level of care or coordination. So why pick on small planes? Yes they're dangerous (1 out of 300 is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

involved in a fatal accident each year) but general aviation is in the public interest. Small planes reach the remote parts of the country not served by commercial airliners, perform rescue operations, and—why deny the economic benefits—they generate nearly $6 billion worth of factory billings each year. Furthermore, with Air Force enrollments down, general aviation supplies more than half of the airline pilots in the country. Indeed, the pull of the airlines on small plane pilots has been so dramatic that a recent *Wall Street Journal* article questioned the quality of the flight instructors left behind to teach. This all suggests that we need more GA pilots and that we should be encouraging people to take the risks GA involves, not trying to squelch the impulse.

But while there's some truth to that, it hardly means that the government should write a blank check for general aviators to take stupid risks—particularly since these so often have the capacity to put innocents in unnecessary danger. And unfortunately, in general aviation, there too often are innocents involved. The 342 fatal GA accidents in 1999 produced 628 deaths, meaning that more than a few non-pilots lost their lives. Indeed, if there's an argument to be made for a higher level of regulation, or that somebody should be on hand to give the pilot a once-over before he hits the tarmac (to make certain that he isn't blotto and confirm that he's qualified to fly the course he's got in mind), then these are the people with the most compelling interest at stake. True, their numbers aren't huge, and yes, the chances of a plane falling on any particular house are pretty darn small (something like 1 in 50 million, which according to the—ahem—AOPA safety fact sheet, are less than the odds of being bitten by a shark). But if you happened to own the house that those colliding planes fell on in Burlington Township, New Jersey, you might agree that it's worthwhile to think about relatively painless ways to make those numbers even lower—particularly as congestion of the airways increases.

Unfortunately, the GA lobby has never fully embraced this approach. Back in the 1980s, AOPA fought for its members' unencumbered "right to fly" as though it were enshrined in the Constitution. They were fond of arguing that airliners should have no priority over small planes. If the former were inconvenienced by the latter—too bad. After all, the airlines were no more than businesses and many of their passengers were just pleasure seekers—like much of the general aviation crowd; so why should commercial aviation get preferential treatment? That argument, which the lobby for some time used against the passage of regulations to restrict small craft from airspace around major airports, lost some of its appeal when a small plane collided with an AeroMexico DC 9 over Cerritos, California in 1986, killing 67 on board and 15 on the ground.

Some private pilots are still grieving over the partial restrictions imposed on flying into the big commercial hubs, but it would be hard to argue that these have changed things for the worse—at least as far as safety is concerned. And while small planes still cause problems with their so-called runway incursions—75 percent of these potentially perilous traffic incidents last year involved GA craft—there haven't been any big airliner-small plane mid-air collisions since the Cerritos incident; moreover, the number of near misses has declined from 250 in 1986 to 43 in 1999.

But if the post-Cerritos regulation of hub airspace suggests that sometimes a little common sense applied through regulation is a good thing, AOPA hasn't exactly leapt to embrace this logic elsewhere. For example, when Jessica Dubroff, age seven, crashed her plane trying to cross the country in two days in 1996, AOPA spokesperson Warren Morningstar acknowledged that "Flying takes a level of judgment and maturity that 99.9 percent of kids just don't have." So why allow children into the cockpit? Because, explains Boyer: "The flight instructor [on board with Dubroff] was technically the pilot of that plane." And if you don't find that persuasive, consider the following: "Is there any age at which you're out on the farm where you can't drive a car or a tractor?"

The organization took a similarly obtuse position after Kennedy's crash last summer. At the time, many in the media observed that an instrument-certified pilot might have better known how to save himself and his passengers. AOPA's response was that countries requiring instrument certification for night flying have higher accident rates than the United States. But wouldn't those rates be even higher without the rule? And is there any doubt that Kennedy and the Bessettes would have preferred that he'd had the training when things got messy up there? And would it really have a chilling effect on general aviation if we were simply to require more training for after-hours jaunts? Boyer is not convinced. "If we start having a rash of accidents..." he says, trailing off. "But off of just one celebrity accident?"

## Passing the Bucks

The great beauty of being a small plane pilot is that AOPA is not only fighting for your right to exercise lethally poor judgment, but it's deeply commit-


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ted to making sure that this right stays affordable. This means preserving one of the great giveaways in the federal budget—the roughly one billion dollar subsidy that the American public hands over to the general aviation community every year. "Perhaps [the government is] paying a little more money for general aviation than it brings in," allows Boyer. "At the same time—what is government?"

This, of course, is a rhetorical question. AOPA has already made it perfectly clear that it thinks government is a device for extracting fees from the airline-traveling public and then using them to finance an air-traffic infrastructure that the small-plane community can use pretty much at will. Boyer as much as acknowledges this perspective and appears to find it unembarrassing. "To have a robust and dynamic and safe infrastructure benefits the country in many ways," he says patiently. And if it happens to benefit people who own planes just a bit more than the rest of us—well, so much the better!

**You can swagger through any private plane terminal, get in the cockpit, and take off without anyone checking to see if you've just consumed a pint of bourbon or three sheets of blotter acid.**

How does the subsidy work? Watch closely: First consider that general aviation pilots use about 58 percent of tower services and constitute 20 percent of overall air-traffic-control activity nationwide (according to an FAA-commissioned 1995 cost allocation study). But the amount that the GA sector pays toward the maintenance of the air traffic control infrastructure is close to trivial: The fuel tax that small planes pay only covers about 3 percent of the total annual costs of that infrastructure. And the remaining 97 percent? It gets picked up by commercial-airline passengers in the form of ticket taxes and other charges. Put another way, in recent years commercial-airline passengers have wound up footing the bill for between $800 million and $1 billion per year that the general aviation crowd should be paying.

To be fair, the recreational pilots who fly planes like the single engine Piper Cub, and constitute roughly three quarters of the general aviation fleet, are getting much less of a free ride than the business jets. While they do use some services—like FAA weather reports—single engine pilots tend to fly at low altitudes, out of the range of air traffic controllers, and to and from airports that don't even have tower facilities. Business jets, however, can make no such claim. Planes like the Gulfstream V—which flies at jumbo-jet altitudes and can zoom from New York to Tokyo in nonstop whisper-smooth luxury—command the same amount of attention from the air traffic control system as any commercial jet. When landing, they get the same first-come-first-serve treatment—meaning that a Gulfstream carrying one portly executive and a lot of gin gets precedence over a 747 carrying 350 passengers in steerage accommodations if it lines up first. Indeed, business and commercial jets are treated the same in all material respects—except the amount that they pay into the system.

But that's outrageous! Well, yes. But the outrage could be addressed by charging user fees that make private planes pay for the services they consume, if Congress could just muster the political will to do it. For a while in the mid-'90s there was a glimmer of hope that Congress might take on at least the business jet set. Recreational pilots were viewed as a lost cause—too rich and ornery, too much the marginal users, and too likely to do something stupid and unsafe (like stop calling in for weather reports) in order to avoid user fees. But the business crowd was such a richly appropriate target. How many Congressmen would want to stand up and defend the right of CEOs like Warren Buffet and his aptly-named corporate jet, the Indefensible, to zoom through the stratosphere on a taxpayer subsidy? The mid-90s saw both the White House and Senate Transportation Committee (chaired by John McCain) introduce user- fee proposals that sought to divide and conquer the general aviation community by exempting recreational users and simultaneously socking it to business aviation.

Unfortunately, what sounded good in theory didn't work in practice—in part because AOPA wouldn't play ball. Rather than isolate the business jet community, and alienate a small but immensely affluent group of constituents, AOPA linked arms with the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other business plane lobbyists—the National Business Aircraft Association and General Aviation Manufacturers Association. This made it impossible to take on the corporate fat cats without attacking the more numerous and politically powerful weekend hobbyists—which no one in Washington has had the courage to do for years. The issue died.

"If I recall correctly," says Phil Boyer with some self-satisfaction, "this was the first year that the administration acknowledged that they will exempt general aviation from the fuel tax." Boyer explains that this position was only arrived at through persistent "education." But does he mean education or being beaten into submission? Boyer leans forward conspiratorially: "I was trying to use a kinder word," he says, laughing a bit theatrically. "But they are both synonymous."

## What's Really at Stake

But even though GA's free ride has been secured for the time being, AOPA has its work cut out for it. As this Summer of Hell travel season drew to a close, it was becoming abundantly clear to many Americans that whatever system we have for regulating the nations sky ways simply does not keep the traffic moving fast enough. (Delays have increased by 50 percent over the last five years; cancellations are up by 130 percent.) What AOPA fears is not so much the congestion, but one of the possible solutions that has been bandied about, urged forward by the Clinton administration, and adopted by more than 20 other countries (such as the U.K., New Zealand, and Germany) already. It is a solution that makes GA's blood run cold. It is called corporatization.

The idea behind corporatization is this: The FAA has more responsibility than it can handle, and air-traffic control is an operational system that should be run like a business, not like a bureaucracy. By spinning off these operations into a quasi-public entity that would be controlled by a board comprising representatives of the major aviation stakeholders—including the major airlines and general aviation—corporatization's advocates claim that the system could be made to run more nimbly and efficiently. Congress has never quite fallen in love with the idea, in part because of the (quite legitimate) concern that a corporatized entity controlled in part by the airlines might be tempted to maximize profits at the expense of safety, and in part—one suspects—because Congress likes the level of influence it currently wields over airline regulation.

Neither, for that matter, does AOPA. AOPA has plenty of friends in Congress, and it would like to see them keep a firm hand on the air-traffic-control system. AOPA does not have a lot of friends in the commercial airline industry, and the idea of jockeying for position with them on the board of a corporatized entity is enough to drain the blood from a lobbyist's face. "We have a national air transportation system," says Boyer with some indignation. "It isn't a private company and I hope it never becomes a private company."

But wait: Isn't the world of general aviation peopled by staunchly libertarian captains of industry who, in the ordinary course, have great faith in the capabilities of the private sector? Well, yes, but this is different. Not only would a corporatized entity mean potentially less control for AOPA, it could be the first step down the road toward—gasp—user fees. Before you know it, general aviation might actually be paying its fair share of the air traffic control structure's operating costs.

"I have to look at the history, and New Zealand's part of that history," says Boyer solemnly. The Kiwis exempted general aviation from user fees when they privatized their system 13 years ago, but last July they changed their mind and applied the fees across the board. Boyer's voice raises half an octave just thinking about it. "So it's simple enough to say that we're against user fees for all categories of users" he says.

## Sabers in Reserve

Simple, sure, but what if it's just plain wrong? What if five years from now it becomes clear that corporatization really is the best way forward, and that improvement of the nation's air-traffic-control structure really hinges on this reform? Would we really want to be stuck with the next-best-alternative simply because AOPA and general aviation are unprepared to give up their influence and their free ride?

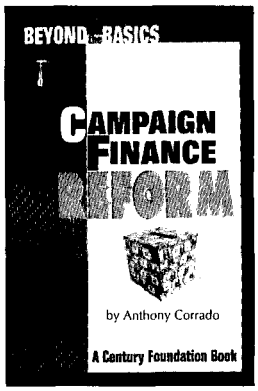
Of course not. That's why Congress and the next administration should face the user fee issue now. Charging GA its fair share for the services it consumes has at least two advantages—the first of which being that it's fair, and the second being that it will give AOPA and its sister small-plane lobbyists at least one less reason to throw itself into the breach if and when corporatization becomes a realistic possibility. Plus, it wouldn't be such a bad thing to send the message that Washington does have the courage to face down GA when it's the right thing to do. Plus, it would be fun to watch the show.

"Believe me, we can rattle a saber if we want to," says Boyer seriously. Out comes the palm again, like this, clenching and unclenching. "Where needed that open hand has to become a closed fist."


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE CENTURY FOUNDATION

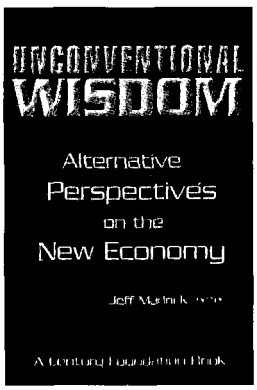
## NEW THIS FALL




### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

BEYOND THE BASICS
BY ANTHONY CORRADO
A CENTURY FOUNDATION BOOK
published by THE CENTURY FOUNDATION PRESS
141 pages, paper $12.95, ISBN 0-87078-432-3

Campaign finance expert Anthony Corrado reviews the federal laws governing campaign funding, the financial activity in recent elections, the most controversial aspects of the current system, and the major reform alternatives so that citizens may gain a better understanding of the current controversies over the role of money in politics.




### UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES
ON THE NEW ECONOMY
JEFF MADRICK, EDITOR
A CENTURY FOUNDATION BOOK
published by THE CENTURY FOUNDATION PRESS
376 pages, paper $12.95, ISBN 0-87078-444-7

In this volume, leading economists debunk conventional wisdom and clarify distinctions between economics in theory and in practice. Contributors include Edward N. Wolff, Anthony P. Carnevale, Stephen J. Rose, Robert H. Frank, Richard H. Steckel, and James Crotty.

**To order these books call: 1-800-552-5450, in D.C. 1-202-797-6258**

THE CENTURY FOUNDATION *formerly the TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND*

41 EAST 70TH ST., NY, NY 10021 ◆ 212.535.4441 ◆ www.tcf.org ◆ 1755 MASS. AVE., NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20036


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Even before his assassination, writers, pundits, and political cartoonists were making hay with the evident tensions within Bobby Kennedy's personality. As Evan Thomas puts it in his new biography* Robert Kennedy: His Life*: "The Good Bobby/Bad Bobby dichotomy, limned by cartoonist Jules Feiffer, became a cliché even before he died. Was he the hard-bullying, McCarthyite, wiretapping, Hoffa-Castro-obsessed hater forever scowling and vowing to "get" his enemies? Or was he the gentle, child-loving, poetry-reading, soulful herald of a new age?"*

*In order to explore this question, we offer the following review of Thomas' book by Harris Wofford, together with passages from the book itself that demonstrate the most compelling good and bad sides of RFK.*

# Clarity Through Complexity

## By Harris Wofford

THE FIRST WAVE OF WRITING ABOUT Robert and John Kennedy and the New Frontier was overwhelmingly romantic and sentimental. Its high-water mark—also perhaps a turning point—came in Arthur Schlesinger's moving 1978 biography of Robert Kennedy, which Evan Thomas in his illuminating new biography, *Robert Kennedy: His Life*, still considers "magisterial."

Schlesinger wrote as a committed colleague of the Kennedys and as a critical historian. His book, written in heroic terms, reinforced the American public's continuing love affair with their lost leaders of the Sixties, and with the extraordinary Kennedy clan.

In the years since, the wave of writing on that decade of high hopes and bitter tragedy has been dominated by the spirit of revision and deconstruction, often crossing the line from critical skepticism into pervasive cynicism, or into the murky waters of conspiracy theory.

In the new evidence uncovered by congressional committees, or discovered in long-secret records belatedly released by the government or presidential libraries, there is plenty of shocking and confusing material to draw on and questions to ask: CIA assassination plots, dalliance with organized crime, obsession with Castro, fear of J. Edgar Hoover, and the demon sex rising up in comical but fateful ways. Who was responsible? Who knew what and when?

Despite it all, our sense of the magic and the mystery of John and Robert Kennedy has lingered on. Now comes Evan Thomas, *Newsweek* editor, author of previous instructive books—*The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared*, on the early days of the CIA and, with Walter Isaacson, *The Wise Men*. Thomas' truly magisterial biography of Robert Kennedy may signal a new wave of writing on the Kennedy brothers that will at last bring those ever-fascinating figures into clear focus.

Based on years of research, this rich, detailed, and balanced account of Robert Kennedy brings that many-sided man to life more vividly that anyone has done. In doing so this gripping book that is so hard to skim conveys the complicated context of the times. Evan Thomas is not afraid of complexity; indeed, it is his route to clarity.

Following the facts where they lead also turns out to be the route to the resurrection of both Robert and John Kennedy as real heroes in the classical sense. They emerge as large players who lived dangerously and strove mightily on the public stage of the world, with great daring, great promise, and great flaws. In this intricate tale in which the personal and the political are so intertwined, Robert and John are both tragic and comic.

The comedy comes to a head and turns into tragedy when the puritan brother, whose first great enemy was organized crime (the target of his first book, *The Enemy Within*), and whose pride was in telling the unvarnished truth, discovers that the CIA (beginning in the last months of the Eisenhower administration but extending for two years into the Kennedy watch) had engaged two of the worst of those criminals in farcical efforts to kill the head of state of Cuba. And then that brother, the attorney general of the United States, learns from the director of the FBI (the one man he most fears) that his

---

FORMER SEN. HARRIS WOFFORD, *a member of President Kennedy's administration, is CEO of the Corporation for National Service.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brother, the president, was consorting with a woman tied to those very same criminals.

Because those facts comprise the most terrible secrets Robert Kennedy could imagine—the disclosure of which could wreak havoc on the reputation of his brother and the United States of America—he did everything in his power, contrary to his nature, to keep the truth from being known.

Thereafter, Robert bore the burden of the possibility that his own actions, in some awful, unprovable way, had resulted in his brother's assassination—the possibility that after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, his goading of the CIA to get rid of Castro, and his own continuing pursuit of Sam Giancana and organized crime, after knowing the power of blackmail they held over the President, had backfired. A corollary question: Did the CIA plots against Castro play a part in the Soviet's decision to install missiles in Cuba?

The two weeks of the Cuban Missile Crisis in which the world wavered on the brink of nuclear war brought the two brothers together in a new intimacy. "Thank God for Bobby," the President said on the last night of the crisis.

The chapter on that crisis is alone worth the book. It supplements and corrects Robert Kennedy's own *Thirteen Days*. It tells of his first blustering proposal for a "sink the Maine" stratagem, then his deepening second thoughts, then his courage in standing up to the room full of powerful hawks and putting forward the moral questions, and the long-kept-secret but crucial negotiation and compromise with the Russians. In this chapter, as in the now available tape recording, one can, as Thomas says, "almost hear the blending of their complimentary talents—JFK steady and reasonable, RFK urgent and probing." He concludes: "Given the stakes and the pressure, their performance was remarkable. Some myths *are* true: This was their finest hour."

In contrast were other hours of bravado and play, also displaying the different style of the two brothers: John, detached, cool, debonair, cavalier in his social life—seldom socializing with the boisterous Robert Kennedys. In the book you can feel the elegant touch of Jacqueline Kennedy—and the other contrasting mode of entertainment at Hickory Hill as Robert or Ethel pushed their guests, like the formally dressed Arthur Schlesinger, into their swimming pool. "Enough!" John said to Ethel, after reading the bad press. Or you can see Robert testing himself on high rocky mountains or over fast-running rapids to prove that he was the bravest of them all. Robert liked Emerson's advice: "Always do what you're afraid to do."

Robert paid a high price for his fear of firing J. Edgar Hoover, but who knows what price might have been paid if he tried? After John's death he underscored the admonition of Herodotus: "All arrogance will reap a harvest rich in tears. God calls men to a heavy reckoning for overweening pride."

**"Given the stakes and pressure of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Kennedys' performance was remarkable. Some myths are true: This was their finest hour."**

Reading Aeschylus at Jacqueline Kennedy's suggestion, Robert began to wonder if the Kennedy family had somehow overreached, dared too greatly.

Thomas' powerful book should put an end to the "Good Bobby/Bad Bobby" caricature that caught on after Jules Feiffer's famous cartoon. "Only two Bobbies?" asked Robert Coles, the child psychologist friend of RFK. "Why not four or five?" Without thinking hard, Coles ticked them off to Thomas: "Bobby the idealist; Bobby the plotter; Bobby the adventurer; Bobby the family man."

Thomas' story adds other Bobbies: Bobby the acolyte, the religious one of the brothers. Bobby the Messianic presidential candidate. Bobby the protector of family. Bobby the runt seeking to win his father and brother's respect. Bobby the lover of Ethel, who from memory, after their wedding scribbled the words from the Book of Ruth to his wife who gave him the unconditional love he got from nowhere else "...for wither Thou goeth I will go; and where Thou lodgest I will lodge ... when Thou dyest then will I die and we will be together forever."

This book enables the reader to add his own Bobby. Like a good eye doctor trying to find the prescription for the clearest vision, Thomas offers us one lens after another. In the end Thomas ponders Robert's "struggle to overcome fear and wonders what if he had lived he might have done." It is a story, he says, "of an unpromising boy who died as he was becoming a great man."

Yes, that's about it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Bobby: Good, Bad, And In Between

*The many incarnations of Robert Kennedy*

BY EVAN THOMAS

## The Phineas Understudy

*In 1942, RFK left the Catholic Portsmouth Priory prep school amid a cheating scandal that has never been fully resolved and became a student at the resolutely Brahmin Milton Academy. There he became friends with the model for the tragic hero Phineas in John Knowles'* A Separate Peace*:*

Shy, prickly, and demoralized, Robert Kennedy arrived at Milton, his sixth school in ten years, in the fall of 1942. Milton was a traditional feeder school for Harvard, which recommended it to Ambassador Kennedy, but the tone and culture were High WASP, unwelcoming to Catholic new money. Milton could have been a disaster for Bobby Kennedy. He arrived knowing no one and made little attempt to learn anyone's name. He simply called the other boys "fella," as in, "hey, fella." Kennedy was instantly, and not affectionately, nicknamed Fella. In the recollections of his classmates, he was deemed to have "a chip on his shoulder," "a short fuse," and, just as unacceptable, "the wrong clothes." There were a few Catholics on campus, but most of them worked in the kitchen or made beds. Almost all the students came to the school in eighth or ninth grade. Bobby entered in eleventh grade, after the cliques had already formed. His schoolmates insisted, somewhat defensively, that Milton was free of prejudice. "There were no ugly incidents," said Joy Luke, who went to the coordinate girls' school across the street. "But we were all aware his father was a bootlegger." RFK could have remained an outcast, but for a friendship he formed while playing football.

ARCHIVE/KRT

At Portsmouth, Kennedy had been a slow, small, but inordinately determined second-string halfback. As he neared his seventeenth birthday, Kennedy had filled out and hardened. He still looked scrawny in street clothes and walked head down, "like a bird in a storm," as one of the Milton girls described him. But he was taut and wiry. While his legs were short and stubby, his torso was long and muscled, and his arms, particularly his forearms, were well developed. "Bobby is going to be the most robust and Jack practically admits to us—though not to Bobby—that Bobby could throw him now," Rose wrote Kathleen and Joe Jr. At football practice at Milton, he tore into tackling dummies "as if his life depended on it," recalled Sam Adams, another would-be halfback trying out for the team. Adams and Kennedy both made the second backfield, along with a younger boy, a tenth grader named David Hackett.

Hackett would become a schoolboy god, Milton's best football and hockey player ever, his schoolmates swore decades later. Little boys would follow him around, "like the Pied Piper," recalled Mary Bailey Gimbel, who was at the Milton Academy girls' school at the time. Hackett's appeal to Kennedy, however, was less as a boy hero than as an anti-hero, a romantic renegade. In his famous coming-of-age novel, *A Separate Peace*, John Knowles would use Hackett (whom he had met at summer school at Exeter) as the model for his doomed gold-

*From the book* Robert Kennedy: His Life *by* EVAN THOMAS. *Copyright © 2000. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster. All rights reserved.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

en boy, Phineas. Phineas possessed a "scatterbrained eloquence," a "calm ignorance of the rules with a winning urge to be good." He was a "model boy who was most comfortable in the truant's corner." So, in real life, was Hackett. "Hackett was offbeat," said Joy Luke. "If he couldn't find the right words, he'd try a different way." Hackett was an astonishingly graceful athlete and "a wild man. He'd do anything and get away with it, in a charming way," said Tom Cleveland, the more traditional campus "big man" of the era.

Hackett took an immediate shine to Kennedy. "We were both misfits," he later recalled. Hackett liked Kennedy's "impulsiveness and fearlessness," he said. He enjoyed his irreverent humor and admired the fact that, in a world of conformity, Kennedy was "willing to embarrass his friends." Bobby made no attempt to downplay his Catholicism; indeed, he tried to expose others, urging Hackett to join him at Sunday mass. Hackett was enormously impressed one Sunday when Kennedy, seeing that an altar boy was missing, suddenly hopped over the prayer rail. Quite unself-consciously, it seemed to Hackett, Kennedy began attending to the priest. Hackett was impressed with Kennedy's unwillingness to compromise to gain acceptance. Kennedy would not join in dirty jokes. He disliked bullying and would step in when an upperclassman tried to push around a younger boy.

Hackett gave Kennedy his fist real taste of friendship. They roughhoused together and played practical jokes. Hackett would be Kennedy's friend for life, long after the adolescent hero worship wore off. For once, Kennedy had a sense of belonging, even a measure of stature in Hackett's reflected glory. Kennedy's confidence grew; his grades improved from D to C with an occasional B ....

Hackett, curiously for someone so exalted by his peers, shared Bobby's outsiderness. A day student who lived not in the dorm but with his genteel, threadbare family in nearby Dedham, Hackett identified with the dispossessed. He and Bobby earnestly questioned why they should be the privileged ones; when Milton played the local public school, Hackett said he felt as if he was on the wrong side of the ball. Something stirred inside Kennedy as well. He had always sided with the downtrodden at school. Now he began to notice inequity in the wider world. On a trip home to Hyannis Port, Bobby began questioning his father about the poverty he glimpsed from the train window. Couldn't something be done about the poor people living in those bleak tenements? Kennedy Sr. dismissed his son's show of social conscience.

ARCHIVE/KRT

Increasingly, as time wore on, the talk between Bobby and Hackett was about joining the marines. The world war was never far away, even from a cloistered prep school. The chapel tower was manned as an observation post, to spot any enemy planes that might be flying nearby. Maps of the Southwest Pacific and North Africa—American battle zones—were hung in classrooms. Almost as soon as he arrived at Milton in the fall of '42, Bobby began agitating with his father to allow him to enlist. He wanted to catch up to his brothers.

## The Red-Baiter's Right Hand Man

*In January 1953, Bobby went to work as a lawyer on the staff of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations under its chairman, Senator Joseph McCarthy.* His father got him the job by picking up the phone and calling McCarthy. (The senator from Wisconsin was soon joking to an aide that he wasn't sure Joe's campaign contribution was worth it.) In later years, the Kennedys would struggle to explain how RFK could have worked for the most reckless red-baiter in history. McCarthy's reputation for smears was well established by 1953. "I just cannot understand how you could ever have had anything to do with Joe McCarthy," the writer Peter Maas said to Bobby Kennedy in the mid-1960s. "Well, at the time, I thought there was a serious internal security threat to the United States," Kennedy responded, "... and Joe McCarthy seemed to be the only one who was doing anything about it." After a pause, Kennedy added, "I was wrong." Some Kennedy true believers were so incredulous that by the liberal late 1960s they were engaging in outright denial. Bobby Kennedy "didn't know Joe McCarthy from a cord of wood," Kenny O'Donnell told an interviewer shortly after Kennedy's death in 1968.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Actually, McCarthy was reasonably close to the family. An affable, hard-drinking Irishman, he took Pat and Jean out on dates. He warmed up by discussing communists for a half hour or so, then "kissed very hard," Jean remembered He was invited up to Hyannis, where he joined, or rather became, the fun. A family friend recalled watching the Kennedy kids laughing and taking home movies as they threw McCarthy, who couldn't swim, off the dock. Bobby invited McCarthy to speak to the law students at the University of Virginia. At dinner at Bobby's house, McCarthy became sodden with drink and pawed a woman. Bobby helped him to bed, but he refused to be embarrassed for him. It is likely that Bobby Kennedy sympathized and identified with McCarthy. Black Irish, and beneath the bluster, vulnerable and eager to please, McCarthy may have been a bully, but to Bobby he was at the same time an underdog who enjoyed provoking the establishment. McCarthy's Catholicism strengthened the bond. The Wisconsin senator had been a lazy and directionless first termer when a group of Catholic priests from Catholic and Georgetown Universities suggested to him that chasing communists would be a worthy cause, as well as politically profitable. The church's ferocious anti-communism appealed to RFK's black-and-white moralism.

**Joseph McCarthy may have been a bully, but to Bobby he was also an underdog who enjoyed provoking the establishment.**

Kennedy did not like McCarthy's chief aide Roy Cohn. Joe Kennedy had asked McCarthy to appoint his son as staff director of the Investigations Subcommittee, but McCarthy had instead chosen Cohn, a young Red-chaser who as an assistant U.S. attorney had helped convict atomic bomb spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Francis "Frip" Flanagan, a Senate staffer close to both the Kennedys and McCarthy, warned Cohn that Robert Kennedy was "disturbed" that he had lost out to Cohn as chief counsel. At their first meeting, Kennedy sullenly looked over his rival. According to Cohn, Kennedy belligerently began, "You puzzle me very much. Mort Downey [a famous entertainer and friend of Joseph Kennedy] thinks you're a great guy. But a lot of people think you're no good. I don't know which side to believe." RFK quickly joined Cohn's detractors. There was much to fault in Cohn: McCarthy's chief henchman was a bully and a smear artist. But Kennedy's loathing may have been more personal. He would from time to time display deep homophobia, and Cohn's homosexuality was unacknowledged but obvious. Cohn, heavy lidded and malevolent, returned the antipathy. He called Kennedy a "rich bitch" and gave him menial work. When Cohn and his fellow investigator and love object, David Schine, took a much-ridiculed inspection tour of American embassies in Europe, weeding out subversive literature and peering under beds for Reds, Kennedy seethed with disapproval. He later said that he complained to McCarthy about the way McCarthy and Cohn were running the committee. "I thought it was headed for disaster .... I told him I thought he was out of his mind and was going to destroy himself." Then, Kennedy said, he quit.

Kennedy's account may be only part of the story. The full explanation for his departure from McCarthy's committee in July 1953, only five months after he signed on, is probably more complex. FBI documents show that McCarthy actually considered making Kennedy staff director in May, but that other staffers were opposed and FBI director J. Edgar Hoover—with whom McCarthy checked every move—was at best indifferent. The FBI's Hoover was beginning to cool on McCarthy, sensing that the senator was about to overplay his hand and become a liability to the anti-communist crusade. It is likely that Hoover shared his concerns with Joseph Kennedy. Kennedy Sr. was in close contact with Hoover—at one time in the 1950s he had tried to hire Hoover away from the FBI as his own personal "director of security." Father would have warned son, expediting his resignation.

Out of work, Kennedy settled for yet another job arranged by his father, as his father's assistant on a presidential committee on government reform, headed by former president Herbert Hoover. Bobby spent his time impatiently listening to old men argue about reorganizing the Department of Agriculture. He quit after a couple of months and went back to work on the Investigations Subcommittee, this time as a counsel for the minority Democrats, who by now had turned on McCarthy. RFK's seat on the committee dais gave him


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a shot at Roy Cohn as McCarthy was self-destructing during the Army-McCarthy hearings in the spring and early summer of 1954. RFK stayed in close touch with Joe Sr.: "Bobby telephones his father regularly and, of course, everybody is listening to the McCarthy hearings," Rose wrote her daughter Pat on June 2.

Cohn would later claim that RFK returned to the committee for the precise purpose of "getting" his old nemesis. Sitting behind Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Washington, Kennedy fed questions to the senators designed to embarrass Cohn about a grandiose anti-communist plan of action written up by his friend David Schine. Cohn grew angrier and angrier as he watched Kennedy snickering and laughing while Senator Jackson picked apart the "plan." During a recess, Cohn stormed across the hearing room to Kennedy and threatened to "get" Senator Jackson. "You can't get away with it, Cohn," Kennedy snarled. The conversation rapidly deteriorated. "Do you want to fight right here?" Cohn demanded. He started to swing at Kennedy, but aides pulled them apart. With a tight smile, Kennedy turned away. The papers found sport the next morning: the headline in the *New York Daily News* was "COHN, KENNEDY NEAR BLOWS IN 'HATE' CLASH." For all his bravado, Kennedy was shaken by the confrontation. After he left the hearing room, he went to find his brother Jack. His brother had warned Bobby against working for McCarthy. An aide saw them huddled together, speaking in low tones.

## The Plotter

*Robert Kennedy was a true believer in counterinsurgency. He coined the term, according to Michael Forrestal, a national security staffer who often worked with him.* "Counterinsurgency might best be described as social reform under pressure," Kennedy wrote. Combating communism by building roads and hospitals appealed to his idealism and sympathy for the downtrodden. Training guerrilla fighters played to his storybook sense of history and reverence for "toughness"; among his heroes was Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox, whose hit-and-run tactics had bedeviled the British during the Revolutionary War. Kennedy soon had Special Forces troops showing his children how to swing from the trees at Hickory Hill. On his desk at the Justice Department, the attorney general kept a green beret.

Kennedy had a romantic and naive faith in the possibilities of "psychological warfare" and "political action," as the CIA defined its cover attempts to stir the masses. RFK could not accept the fact that the KGB was better at these black arts than the CIA. When the Soviets resumed nuclear testing at the end of August, RFK demanded to know why the CIA couldn't bring angry hordes into the streets of Europe, shouting against Soviet war-mongering. He summoned David Murphy, the head of the CIA's east European division, and demanded an explanation. Murphy tried to explain that the CIA could not simply order up a street protest. "Kennedy didn't understand our limitations," recalled Murphy. "He just pouted."

Other government officials could see not only the limitations of trying to win the war of "hearts and minds," but also the dangers of trying. One of RFK's pet ideas was to try to train the police forces of developing countries, particularly those of Latin America. On September 11, 1961, RFK sent a memo to the president urging him to order the FBI and Pentagon to "determine whether all necessary steps are being taken by the internal police to deal with communist infiltration and whether the military or police are prepared to deal with mob riot, or guerrilla bands that may become active ... " In January 1962, the White House set up the Special Group (CI) ("CI" stood for "counterinsurgency") to prod the various government agencies into greater efforts in the struggle against communist subversion. "He thought that by making their cops more like ours, we could stop communism," said Charles Maechling, a State Department official who served as staff director of the Special Group (CI) and had the thankless task of com-

ARCHIVE/KRT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

municating RFK's wishes. The State Department diplomats had their doubts. They knew, from firsthand observations, that the fragile democracies of Asia and Latin American had "no control over their security services," said Maechling. By making them more "professional," the well-meaning Americans risked simply making them more efficient engines of repression.

"There was no evidence that Bob saw the risk of this," said Maechling. He did not want to hear the doubts of the quavering diplomats summoned before the Special Group (CI). Feet up and tie down, he would sullenly greet equivocations with hostile, somewhat random questioning, "He was not so much abusive as abrupt and off-the-wall," said Maechling, who witnessed many interrogations. "He rarely swore. He was just inarticulate. The bureaucrats would react with panic." Kennedy, with his fondness for policemen (Chief William Parker of Los Angeles was a particular favorite, in part because he was a bitter foe of FBI's Hoover), would bring in police chiefs from the heartland to train their foreign counterparts from Latin America and Asia. The "academy," where RFK would show up to deliver graduation addresses, was an old car barn in Georgetown. Inside, men in dark glasses with pitted faces blasted away on the shooting range at large cardboard cutouts of men, each one stenciled Subversive. "We didn't teach them to torture. We tried to teach them not to," said Maechling. "But they didn't want our advice. They wanted our equipment." Armed with walkie-talkies and American record-keeping systems, the Latin policemen became more effective at propping up local oligarchies by chasing down leftist students and labor organizers. Along the way, the "reform" impetus vanished.

**Confronting conservative students in South Africa, RFK asked, "What if God is black?"**

It is more than a little ironic that Robert Kennedy, who naturally identified with radical students challenging the establishment, should have unwittingly provided technical assistance for their oppressors. But as attorney general and the president's all-purpose number two (or Number One-and-a-Half, as he was also known by reporters fascinated by the brother act), Kennedy was spread too thin to really notice. At the Justice Department, where he could count on loyal deputies and had time to ponder and follow up, he was a truly effective leader. But as a member of the Special Group (CI—nominally, not even the head of it—he was nothing more than a shrill goad.) He usually answered back, often without having read the background materials. His lack of sophistication, impatience, and messianic impulse overcame his natural shrewdness and empathy. George Ball, who replaced the unfortunate Chester Bowles as undersecretary of state and regarded counterinsurgency as overintellectualized and often counterproductive, objected when RFK demanded that the United States do something to stop the spread of Chinese communist subversion in Zanzibar. Ball responded with a memo that, he recalled, said something like, "God watches every sparrow that may fall, so I don't see why we have to compete in that league." Kennedy, said Ball, "got his back up." RFK could be truly petulant, once knocking over a chair in anger. On another occasion, right after a newspaper story called him "Washington's No. 2 Man," the Special Group (CI), in a rare moment of open defiance, failed to do Kennedy's bidding on a minor matter. "Well, shit," Kennedy sulked, "the second most important man in the world just lost another one." He slammed down his notebook and walked out of the meeting. The effect of this puerile behavior was predictable: Some bureaucrats passively resisted. Others overcompensated and tried to do too much. Robert Amory, the head intelligence analyst at the CIA, recalled that "the chief of staff of the army said that every school in the army should devote a minimum of 20 percent of its time to counterinsurgency. Well this reached to Finance School and Cooks and Bakers School, and they were talking about how to wire typewriters to explode ... or how to make apple pies with hand grenades inside them. It just really was a ridiculous thing." ...

When Kennedy could not get what he wanted from the bureaucracy, he worked around it. Long before Oliver North, the maverick marine colonel on President Ronald Reagan's national security staff, popularized the term "off-the shelf operation" during the Iran-contra hearings of 1987, Robert Kennedy was running private, custom-made covert actions. A small but illustrative example is his handling of American support for a revolutionary leader named Eduardo Mondlane, whose Liberation Front was trying to free Mozambique, still an African colony, from the Portuguese in the early '60s.


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mondlane came to Washington in the spring of 1963 to lobby for support, essentially setting up a Cold War auction (he was already getting aid from East Bloc countries). At the State Department, Dean Rusk would not see the African revolutionary: the United States could not back a rebellion against Portugal, a NATO ally. But RFK met with Mondlane and was impressed with his charisma. He needed to find a way to funnel money to Mondlane while preserving the "deniability" of the United States government. A rare Dictabelt recording of a telephone conversation between RFK and JFK, made public in 1998, shows the almost offhand way these matters were handled in the Kennedy administration. The president and attorney general were discussing sundry personnel matters when Robert Kennedy abruptly brought up Mondlane and the need for deniability. "Now one other thing," RFK began. "Uh ... I've had some conversations the last couple of weeks with a fellow named Mondlane ... He's a terrifically impressive fellow." Secretary Rusk, RFK explained, had "to be able to sit down with the Portuguese and say none of these people [Mondlane and the Mozambique Liberation Front] are getting any money." The attorney general suggested that a private foundation could be enlisted to provide some of the cash, but the rest would have to come "from us" (all told, about $100,000; RFK mentioned the Ford Foundation as a possible resource). RFK proposed that either Averell Harriman, an under secretary of state, or John McCone, the head of the CIA, could oversee the operation—not in their formal capacity as State Department or CIA officials, but "just as someone to use their own judgment." (Both Harriman and McCone were personal friends who maintained direct contact with the attorney general.) RFK said that Mondlane would be meeting with the heads of some African nations at an upcoming meeting. The president's taping system recorded the following exchange:

The president: 'Course we wouldn't want him [Mondlane] to be saying that he got anything from us.

RFK: No, but you wouldn't have that, you see. You'd have it through some private foundation.

The president: Yeah.

RFK: Then they could have cut-outs on it.

The president: I see

RFK: And John McCone can handle it. So it wouldn't have to come from the Agency.

This sort of frank talk about cut-outs and go-betweens to mask the true source of the money and thus preserve deniability, is the sort of exchange the Kennedys would record only by happenstance and never write down. But it was integral to their relationship and operating style.

## The Man of Conscience

*One particular passage from Camus' writing caught Robert Kennedy's attention. In his daybook, he scrawled: "Perhaps we cannot prevent this world from being a world in which children are tortured. But we can reduce the number of tortured children. And if you believers don't help us, who else in the world can help us do this?"*

Kennedy's sensitivity to the suffering of children explains some of his fascination with the quote, which he used on the dedication page of *To Seek a Newer World*, a collection of his speeches and thoughts published in 1967. But he was also animated by the lesson he had drawn from existentialism: that the way to deal with despair and the heaviness of fate was by acts of individual courage.

Nowhere was injustice more stark, or the prospects for change bleaker, than in South Africa in 1966. The country's white ruling class had stripped the blacks of freedom and a chance to earn a decent living. Protest from the First World was muted; the United States government, like others in the West, regarded South Africa as an outpost against communism, which seemed to be gaining ground on the continent in the early and middle '60s. The reform movement within Africa was tiny and frightened. Margaret Marshall, a young student activist in South Africa at the time, recalled the loneliness: "South Africa was in its most mean, oppressive period. It was a nasty time. There was real fear—the first

ARCHIVE/KRT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reports of torture. The world seemed to have ignored us. We invited [UN Secretary General] Dag Hammarskjöld and U Thant. No one came. Visitors who did would say, I didn't realize it was so complicated. But Bobby Kennedy was different ..."

Marshall's group, the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) invited Kennedy to give the annual Day of Affirmation speech at the University of Cape Town in June 1966. Kennedy's interest was immediately piqued by the chance to speak out. He accepted the invitation—"as a dare" recalled his friend Lou Oberdorfer, "like climbing Mount Kennedy."

He had second thoughts. What if the South African regime used his appearance as an excuse to crack down harder? By indulging his own need to prove his courage and defiance, would he be putting others at risk? Kennedy's disquiet was played out during the drafting of the Day of Affirmation speech. He would tone down Adam Walinsky's heated prose, only to have his aide try to slip fiery words back in. When Kennedy finally blew up, Joe Dolan suggested that he get rid of Walinsky rather than struggle with him. "Oh, Sorensen was worse," Kennedy sighed, thinking about his brother's talented wordsmith who could be prickly, too, about defending his prose. Walinsky was not fired, but was layered: Richard Goodwin was brought in to help craft the speech—which would be remembered as Kennedy's best.

The South African government regarded Kennedy's trip as a publicity junket and canceled the visas of 40 journalists who planned to accompany him. No government official was at the Johannesburg airport to greet him when he arrived on Saturday night, June 4, shortly before midnight. A huge crowd broke through the glass doors and engulfed RFK, tearing off his cufflinks. Fistfights broke out between anti- and pro- apartheid demonstrators.

An anxious Margaret Marshall welcomed Kennedy on behalf of the students' union. She would be his guide for the next five days. "I was the vice president of NUSAS because all the men had been sent to prison," she recalled. Five days earlier, the president of the students' union, Ian Robertson, had been "banned"—forbidden to meet in a room with more than one person—for five years. "Robertson's banning terrified me," said Marshall. "I was 20 years old, thinking about the threat of no work, no passport, and no university." Kennedy appeared equally nervous. Stopping over in London, where was interviewed by the BBC, he had seemed distracted. "We're only here on earth for a short time" he said, as he stared past the camera. With Marshall, he was tentative and solicitous. "He didn't walk in and say this is the way it's going to be," said Marshall. "He kept asking, 'Is this going to hurt anyone? I can do this, but is anyone going to pay the price for me?' He worried that he was going to put me at risk. I said, 'Don't protect me.'"

In the biting cold of a South African winter's day, a crowd of about 15,000 surged around the auditorium at the University of Cape Town. Loudspeakers were placed outside to relay the speech, but South African security forces cut the wires. An empty chair was left for the banned Robertson. Kennedy's eyes were glistening with tears as he rose to speak. On this Day of Affirmation, he spoke of personal freedom and the "sacred rights of Western Society" that separated "us and Nazi Germany ... Athens and Persia." He warned against the "danger of futility: the belief that there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills." Steadying his quavering voice, he declared that many of the world's great movements began with the work of a single man. "Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation ... It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lots of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

When he had finished there was silence. Like a child, Marshall recalled, he looked around him, "as if to say, was the speech OK?" Then, with a rush, a roar of applause crashed over him. Marshall could see that he was immensely relieved, "high and exhilarated." For the next three days, he toured the country, increasingly emboldened. He stood on the roof of his car and led curious blacks in singing choruses of "We Shall Overcome." With Ethel, he set forth on walking tours, first of the upper-class neighborhoods, stopping black servants in the street to shake hands and say "I'm Robert Kennedy from the United States and this is my wife Ethel." Frightened by an entourage of white people bearing down on him, one black man gave a yelp and ran away. As word of his visit spread, blacks crowded around him to touch him—whites never touched blacks in South Africa—and began holding high the lucky hand that had shaken Robert Kennedy's. Kennedy insisted on visiting the black townships, quizzing Marshall all the while. (Kennedy: "Where's the fire station?" Marshall: "There


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

isn't one.") On a visit into the bush to see Chief Albert Luthuli, a founder of the banned African National Congress, he played a record of his brother's civil rights speech in June 1963 (racial equality is "a moral issue as old as the Scriptures ... as clear as the American Constitution ... ") "Master, master!" cried the locals as they crowded around his car. "Please don't use that word," asked Kennedy, embarrassed. Meeting secretly with Ian Robertson, he taught the banned student leader how to jump up and down on the floor to disrupt electrical eavesdropping devices. Confronting conservative students who found biblical support for apartheid, he asked "What if God is black?"

On the next-to-last night, Kennedy went to a raucous and unusual mixed-race party at the home of his hosts in Johannesburg, a wealthy South African couple, Irene and Clive Mennel. The party rolled on until 4 a.m. (Kennedy, as usual, rarely slept; Marshall recalled him stretched out on the floor of the plane, wearing eyeshades.) At 5 a.m., Irene Mennel went to Kennedy's room to awaken him for the day's events. The guest room was next door to the bedroom of Mrs. Mennel's two-year-old daughter, Mary. Kennedy had heard Mary crying in the pre-dawn darkness and gone to comfort her. Mrs. Mennel found Kennedy peacefully sleeping on Mary's bed, cuddled with the little girl.


The Washington Monthly

# Journalism Award

AUGUST 2000

**MICHAEL M. PHILLIPS**

"Hippocratic Oath: Can World Bank lend money to third world without hurting poor"

*The Wall Street Journal*, August 14, 2000

*An examination of the costs and benefits of the creation of a massive coal mining project financed by the World Bank in India. Despite an earnest attempt to ensure they did no harm, the Bank's project, like so many in the past, ended up enriching a state-owned mining company while forcing the resettlement of thousands of villagers.*

**JANE MAYER**

"Bad News: What's behind the recent gaffes at ABC?"

*The New Yorker*, August 14, 2000

*Who wanted Leonardo DiCaprio to interview President Clinton? Why did Diane Sawyer stand on her head with Elian Gonzalez? And why did ABC kill a critical story about its parent company, Disney, violate its policies by paying Monica Lewinsky for an exclusive interview, and reduce political news coverage? The answer in large part, according to Mayer, is David Westin—the stubborn president of the news division who might be a bit out of his league.*

**BURL GILYARD**

"The Complaint Department: Fifty years ago Minneapolis launched a program to stamp out discrimination. Now many of the dream's supporters doubt the city's civil-rights agencies are equal to the task."

*City Pages* [Minneapolis/St. Paul ], August 16, 2000

*Gilyard examines the troubled Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights and the Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights, launched by Hubert Humphrey Jr. in 1947. In talking to former volunteers, clients, and government officials, Gilyard discovers that inefficiencies, infighting and insufficiently supported decisions have undermined the $1.9-million program's main purpose: to help victims of discrimination who have fallen through the cracks.*

THE MONTHLY JOURNALISM AWARD is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to The Washington Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Or e-mail us at **editors@washingtonmonthly.com**. Nominations for stories run in September are due October 1, 2000.




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Memo of the Month

...via email

From: David Hodgkins
Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2000 5:34 PM
To: All Employees
Subject: Everyone Message: City Picnic and Workers Compensation

This everyone message is from David Hodgkins.

In regards to the events planned for the City Employee Picnic on Saturday, August 26, 2000 please be advised that there is no workers' compensation available for any injury which may occur while participating in these off-duty activities, pursuant to Labor Code Section 3600.

The relevant portions of Labor Code Section 3600 state that there is workers' compensation only if : "the injury does not arise out of voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity not constituting part of the employee's work-related duties, except where these activities are a reasonable expectancy of, or are impliedly required by the employment." The City is not requiring participation in the events of Saturday, August 26, 2000, either explicitly or implicitly. All participation is purely voluntary on the part of the employees taking part in those events.

David W. Hodgkins
Employee Relations Officer
City of Berkeley



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Downsizing

## *Nanotechnology—Why you should sweat the small stuff*

BY NICHOLAS THOMPSON

WE MAKE MOST EVERYTHING BY tearing stuff apart. To make paper, we plant trees, chop them down, and send the wood through our mills. To make spoons, we yank iron up out of the earth, drop it into blast furnaces to make steel, and then mold and shape it at extreme temperatures.

But what if we could work from the bottom up and construct paper from atoms, the smallest building blocks of life and matter? What if we could make a spoon by taking individual iron atoms and locking them together one by one with carbon atoms and whatever else we wanted? It'd sure be easier and cleaner. We could throw away those miners' helmets, plant geraniums in our blast furnaces, and create almost anything out of our trash.

The idea has been percolating since 1959 when Richard Feynman, one of the century's most admired physicists, gave a speech titled "There's Plenty of Room at the Bottom" in which he argued that: "The principles of physics, as far as I can see, do not speak against the possibility of maneuvering things atom by atom." Of course, saying something is possible doesn't mean it's practical and for years afterward the vision wavered, attracting more attention from science fiction philosophers than actual scientists. Eric Drexler, the man who first laid out for a popular audience the complex potential of nanotechnology with his 1986 book *Engines of Creation*, was given only slightly more credit by the scientific community than the average street-corner chemist explaining how to fax your brain to Neptune.

But in the last few years, scientists have come up with one important innovation after another in nanotechnology (the term conveys the size of the objects to be manipulated: a nanometer is one billionth of a meter) and science fiction has gradually been rolling into science fact. New articles appear almost monthly in the leading scientific journals and university research departments are starting to fill with enthusiasts. Chemist Paul Alivisatos at the University of California, Berkeley, says that, 10 years ago, he was the only one in his department working on nanotech; now about 30 percent of the department does. In his 2000 State of the Union address, President Clinton asked us to imagine some of the possibilities: "materials with ten times the strength of steel and only a small fraction of the weight, shrinking all of the information housed in the Library of Congress into a device the size of a sugar cube, detecting cancerous tumors when they are only a few cells in size." This year, you can buy sunscreen whose development owes a crucial debt to nanotechnology; IBM is using nanotech processes to produce read heads (part of a computer's hard drive); and samples of hybrid materials stronger than steel can be purchased online for $1000 a gram.

It seems great, and a lot of it truly is. But we're also pointing our raft down some pretty wild, unmapped waters. Nanotechnology is like biotechnology and genetic engineering on steroids. Together with almost magical possibilities, it portends brutal military applications, dystopic scenarios in which parts of the world turn into "gray goo," and we are moving one giant step closer to playing with the very basis of life. We can't and shouldn't turn the clock backwards; but there remain crucial steps that we need to take, and there is a critical role for government in the development of this technology. Clinton's proposed National Nanotech Initiative should pass Congress in some form this fall; but there needs to be more. Deep government involvement in nanotechnology is more than a practical obligation from a research and national defense perspective. It's close to becoming a moral imperative.

### Eve of the Atom

Nature has created wonderful things, but there are inefficiencies everywhere. Arrange carbon atoms one way and you'll get diamond: a strong substance but not a terribly flexible one. Rearrange them and you'll get rubber bands: flexible, but weak and unable to conduct electricity. There's also another way to fit them togeth-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er that nature hasn't figured out on its own—but that scientists in a lab at Rice University have. Richard Smalley, a Nobel-prize-winning chemist there, has used nanotechnology to create molecules, called nanotubes, that are stronger than any object on earth yet still extremely flexible. If designed to be straight, these nanotubes conduct electricity better than gold; if given a slight twist, they can serve as transistors.

It is currently much too complicated and expensive to use these nanotubes to build original structures from the ground up, but we're not far from being able to mix them in with, for example, the materials currently used to make airplane wings. It's also quite possible that, in 10 or 15 years, we may be able to use something like Smalley's molecules to make entire airplane wings or widescale power systems based on molecular solar panels that take up only a tiny fraction of the space needed for such systems today.

In about the same time, there is strong hope that molecular manipulation could power computers. Computers work on a binary system, meaning that every problem is translated into a series of zeros and ones rapidly added together. (A computer is like a small child who counts on her thumbs, but does it at something approaching light speed.) Modern computers add these basic alternatives together through complicated constructions based on tiny transistors etched into silicon that either carry electrons (one) or don't (zero). Programs translate whatever you input (the letters you type, for example) into this code of ones and zeros and send the data back to the transistors to be processed.

Last summer, researchers at Hewlett Packard and UCLA led by James Heath announced that they had built a single molecular layer capable of serving as a switch able to carry out a single operation, allowing electrons to flow once. A few months later, researchers led by James Tour of Rice and Mark Reed of Yale announced that they had built one that could work repeatedly and, a month later, announced that they had built another that could also store its electrons after calculation (serving as memory). Size is perhaps the main limitation in computer design and, if one of the transistors that we etch onto silicon to power our modern computers were the size of this piece of paper, a molecular computer would be about the size of the period at the end of this sentence.

There are of course many major steps that must be taken before molecular computers sweep the world and we all embed them in our shoes. Long chains of molecules have to be built and integrated with the rest of a computer's functions—faster processors are unquestionably great, but who wants a monitor the size of a fruit fly? Assembly lines and production factories would have to be turned inside out and, like all technologies, it would take a while for it to spread through society, if it ever did. Still, the advantages of nanotechnology are so extraordinary that there's substantial reason to push ahead even if nothing's inevitable. According to Neil Lane, chief scientific adviser to the president, developments in the field "are likely to change the way almost everything—from vaccines, to computers, to automobile tires, to objects not yet imagined—is designed and made."

## Birth of the Cool

Individual companies, however, seem unlikely to start vigorously building these molecular computers or digging into nanotechnology's other potential uses. We're at a scientific halfway point. We know that the technology is plausible, and even likely; but we haven't advanced enough for private industry to commit money to more than sporadic or targeted research. Scientists still have to trudge pretty deep into the jungle and they are likely to frequently step in quicksand. As a result, companies seem likely to support niche research—Nanophase, the company making sunscreen, is researching nanocrystals; Hewlett Packard is exploring how nanotechnology can improve computer memory—but funding for research into the big questions seems more likely to come from public sources. According to Alivisatos: "The government has got to be a major player. It won't just happen in industry. You can't say that this technology is going to make you $400 million next quarter."

Nanotechnology also involves vast overlaps between traditionally defined fields. Every breakthrough by physicists pushes the chemistry a little further, which pushes the molecular biology and so on. But the many arms of research haven't cut a single path forward. To progress, there needs to be constant information sharing—one more unlikely development from companies hoping to patent the ultimate technique. In fact, much of the research that has already led to important advancements in the field has been government-funded. James Tour and Mark Reed, for example, completed much of their research into molecular computing with support from DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

A good parallel comes from another project initially funded by DARPA: the Internet. Private industry has spurred incredible Internet development, but government took the first steps. The ARPANET, the backbone for what would eventually be transformed into the Internet, was designed in the late '60s to facilitate com-


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munication during nuclear battle. The same pattern holds for invention after invention. Global position satellites were first created for military use and are now used by everyone from lost hikers to UPS. Government helped spur along laser beam technology that we now use to etch circuits into silicon and improve vision.

### The Next Big Thing Is Small

The problem for scientists, and the principal reason for the murkiness of the road ahead, lies in how complicated the science gets at this size. In large groups, atoms move predictably. Left alone, they tend to skid randomly in "Brownian motion," and similar problems arise from the quantum effect: the ability of single electrons to manifest in two places at the same time. According to Martin Muscovits of the University of Toronto, a machine trying to handle individual atoms could easily become confused and place them incorrectly "like a poorly handled marionette that places a forkful of food in its eye." Other scientists describe what they call the "fat fingers" problem: Picking up and moving atoms entails building instruments at least as big as the things they are moving. Individual atoms also react to tiny increments of heat and motion. When researchers were first able to push them around with a device called a Scanning Tunneling Microscope, the experiment was carried out in a vacuum at a temperature approaching absolute zero (-459 degrees Fahrenheit).

Proponents of nanotechnology automatically respond to these concerns with what they call the existence proof: Our bodies, and the bodies of sea anemones or plants for that matter, are essentially nanomachines manipulating single atoms. Our whole body works through a complicated system whereby DNA tells RNA to go and tell ribosomes to go and make proteins that, in turn, create muscles, hormones, and everything else that powers our body. If it's impossible to move atoms around, how do humans do it? It sounds preposterous to even think that, as Eric Drexler described in the 1970s, we could create a machine that could rearrange the atoms in a bale of hay, a few shrubs, and some water, and make a slab of beef. But that isn't so far away from what a cow already does—even if it does it in a way that we are miles from fully understanding.

Given recent advancements and our rapidly expanding ability to understand how the body works and how we can mimic it in a laboratory, the optimists who say nanotechnology will eventually have a major impact are probably closer to right than the pessimists focused on Brownian motion. There are of course numerous forecasted scientific revolutions that flopped or floundered—think how much hype there was about robots 20 years ago. But as Smalley says, "when a scientist says something is possible, they're probably underestimating how long it will take. But if they say it's impossible, they're probably wrong."

**"This is the first major technology in 50 years where the United States does not have a commanding lead internationally."**

### On Sequoia Time

Beyond the funding, the government has an imperative to develop an architecture to influence how nanotech develops. Although the government essentially invented the Internet, once it began to boil over into a societal force, the government kept away and let the technological wonks whose minds were absorbed by their modems essentially choose the Net's regulatory scheme: nothing. Government doesn't tax Web commerce and it has a terribly hard time blocking child pornography. There are few ways to thwart viruses like 'Melissa' or 'I Love You.' With genetic engineering, regulations were crafted during the Reagan administration by corporations fascinated with the new technology and with economic incentives to make the market grow as quickly as possible. The result was a decision to mostly avoid new legislation and wrap existing laws around the new technology. That was good for the industry, but not great for safety.

Nanotechnology has one foot planted in academia, but another firmly planted in the swaggering techno-libertarian culture of Silicon Valley. Nanotech is seen as one of the triumphant gateways into computing's future, and the Valley crowd makes it a hot discussion topic on favored technology Web sites like *Slashdot*; and magazines like *Wired*. Consequently, there's a real danger that nanotechnology regulation will continue to swing further and further toward a world where the next gadget is the future and the government is the past. If, as the saying goes, war is too serious to be left just for generals, then nanotechnology is far too serious to be left just to scientists and the new technology firebrands. As former *Wired* editor, Paulina Borsook writes in her new book *Cyberselfish*, "The Silicon Valley worldview contains with-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in it all different colors of free-market/antiregulation/social Darwinistic/ aphilanthropic/guerrilla/neo-pseudo-biological/atomistic threads." Richard Hayes, coordinator of the Exploratory Initiative on the New Human Genetic Technologies, puts it more succinctly: "Silicon Valley types suffer from a sort of arrested development. They are enamored of their toys and just don't see the dangers."

So far, the more solemn proponents of nanotechnology have been able to deflect the wild-eyed 20-somethings dreaming of unregulated billions. The discipline's political center is the Foresight Institute, an organization founded by Eric Drexler to plan for a future which nanotechnology will help shape. Foresight directors are emphatic about the potential dangers and they have been publishing papers for years about the possible consequences of nanotechnology and strategies to avoid them. Still, even at Foresight, there is an overriding optimism that, at the least, needs balancing when real decisions are made. When asked about concerns voiced by very serious scientists, such as Brownian motion, that could undercut the dependability of nanomachines, Christine Peterson, president of the institute, grew exasperated, as though the debate had really been settled beyond discussion for everyone: "I am ashamed that people will say these things. It has been dealt with in the literature. There is exhaustive research into this!"

## Joy To The World

The stakes are very high. All too many technological advances make possible more powerful weapons: from slingshots to sharper blades to hydrogen bombs to nasty new toxins. But nanotech has an even larger downside than most, both in the scale of potential disasters and the opportunity for individuals to create them.

The main problem stems from the very real possibility of nanoassemblers. It would be impossibly time-consuming to make a piece of paper by hand from the ground up, bonding carbon atoms to one another. But what if we could build little robots (nanobots) to do it? And nanobots to build more little robots? Then we would start with one nanobot, soon have two, then four, eight, sixteen, and so on. If they reproduced every hour, you could fire one up on Friday afternoon and, because of the wonders of exponential growth, come back on Monday morning to find 18 quintillion. Drink a cup of coffee, check your email, and before you knew it they'd have doubled again. This wouldn't be a bad thing if they were doing something like deradiating nuclear waste and there were some limit to their reproduction; it wouldn't be so good if all 18 quintillion were chewing up the local foliage.

In a recent essay quickly seized on by NPR, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*—along with, of course, *Slashdot*—Bill Joy, one of the founders of Sun Microsystems and inventors of the Java programming language, issued a dire warning. "A bomb is blown up only once—but one nanobot can become many, and quickly get out of control ... Thus we have the possibility not just of weapons of mass destruction but of knowledge-enabled mass destruction, this destructiveness hugely amplified by the power of self-replication. I think it is no exaggeration to say we are on the cusp of the further perfection of extreme evil." To Joy, we should just stop developing these technologies so readily tuned to evil or unforeseeable disaster: "The only realistic alternative I see is relinquishment."

There's a gaping hole in Joy's proposed strategy however: It's impossible. We have never relinquished scientific advancement, even in the easiest cases when research is extremely centralized, the dangers are clear, and the direct human benefits are few—as in nuclear development. With the dispersed technology of nanotech where, eventually, it will be possible for scientists around the world to labor away in small hidden labs designing toxins that can reproduce themselves, it's also impractical. If all of the goodhearted people in the world relinquished nanotechnology and the next Unabomber turns out to be a molecular biologist, not a mathematician, it might be time to dig Dr. Strangelove's tunnels into the center of the earth. Furthermore, even if relinquishment were practical, there's too much potential benefit. Nanotechnology might well allow us to get most of our energy from non-polluting sources and restore virtual vision to the blind and virtual hearing to the deaf. Mihail Roco, chair of the interagency group that advised the president on nanotech, predicts that, within 10 years, half of all pharmaceuticals will be created by using nanotech. Is this something we want to relinquish?

## Buckle Up

The logical solution is controlled development. The United States needs to push the science forward but we also need to lasso a thick rope around its neck. We need to make sure that, as much as possible, the main research bases for this technology develop either on our own soil or with close allies, and we need to support much of the early research so it can be closely tied into government regulation. The most obvious danger would come if the United States falls behind the rest of the world and finds itself unable to control the technology. The genie isn't close to out of the bottle yet—we are at least 10 years away from functional nanotechnology in our most


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

advanced labs with some of the best scientists in the world; a small lab in Afghanistan is a great deal further away—but we've gotten off to a slow start. As Roco says, "this is the first major technology in 50 years where the United States does not have a commanding lead internationally."

This is doubly important because nanotechnology can't just be used for offensive purposes (like nuclear weapons). The best way to fend off a hostile nanotech attack would be through counter nanotechnology. If some evil scientist really does want to create the dystopia imagined by Bill Joy, he probably couldn't be stopped by ICBMs; it would take predesigned nanotechnology safety systems, built in conjunction with other nations, that could reverse whatever damage was being done. The design of such world-based "active shields," as nano-enthusiasts call them, is a topic for discussion far down the road. We have no idea how the technology will develop and Bill Joy's disaster scenarios are a little farfetched: nano-chemist Susan Sinott says she's "as scared of that as the possibility that my laptop is going to jump off my desk in a minute and eat me." But there are still numerous military implications and we do need to start laying the groundwork for international cooperation and setting the terms for discussion, ideally, by pushing the technology as hard as we reasonably can.

A second more likely problem is that some private company, smelling profit, will cut a corner. Ralph Merkle, a leading scientist who recently left a research position at Xerox PARC to work for Zyvex, the first start-up trying to build nanoassemblers, doesn't think that's likely. For one, he argues, corporations want goodwill and probably would support any proposed guidelines. Zyvex, for example, has pledged to support guidelines proposed by Eric Drexler's Foresight Institute that, among other provisions, require that nanoassemblers be forced to rely on broadcast transmissions, or fuel sources that don't exist in nature, and thus prevent them from running rampant. Furthermore, according to Merkle: "The corporation actually has an incentive to manufacture products but keep its replicators in-house. It's not going to give away something that someone else can use to make the same products. It will want a system that it can create things with and sell."

There's certainly something to this, but it's not entirely convincing in a world where corporations routinely dump effluent into the drinking-water supply, or to take a more recent example, conceal the fact that their automobile tires are likely to explode on rounding a sharp corner. Moreover, it ignores the fact that there are always corporations on the margins fighting for their lives, willing to sell out their final values for a nickel or an eighth-of-a-point stock price increase. If everyone in the business was making lots of money and able to diligently follow every rule, then everybody else would be trying to start new companies. Eventually, someone would end up on the margin. Yes, the private sector will be needed to move the technology, but there are going to have to be significant national and international constraints and oversights. There's something a little unnerving in James Von Ehr, the president of Zyvex's, explanation for his company's advantage over government research: "In the private sector we don't need to justify our work to anyone."

What's needed is a government that can move and adapts quickly and that can inject some humility into nanotech's development: Fairly soon, companies are going to be trying to make things by next Thursday on the atomic level that natural evolution, in all its wisdom, hasn't made in four billion years. In short, the government needs to ensure that what ends up being good for Zyvex is good for America too.

Fortunately, there is some support for scientific funding, necessarily tied to regulation, from both major parties. Moreover, with the amazing completion of the human genome project, there's a spreading recognition that scientific forays based on understanding and mimicking living systems could be as important to the next 40 years as science on the nuclear scale was to the last 40. President Clinton proposed a 500 million dollar nanotech funding initiative that targets five percent of its funding toward ethical research that could begin to create the framework for regulation and Al Gore, if elected, would almost certainly continue this trend: He was the first congressman to hold hearings on the subject, questioning Drexler among others in 1992 on nanotechnology's potential to solve environmental problems. Ideally this would not be a partisan issue, but even with broad support, there'd still be a long way to go. The Department of Defense's nanotech budget, even with Clinton's proposed increase, would still only be $110 million, about the cost of running this summer's single failed test of our Star Wars missile defense.

It's possible that nanotechnology will go nowhere and the carcass of the idea will be dropped off somewhere into the vast pile of potential scientific revolutions that did not revolve. But that's not a risk one should really want to take. As Merkle says, if nanotechnology amounts to even half of what many people think it will, "If you've relinquished it, then you're hosed." ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Why Homer's My Hero

*The All-American family shouldn't have to wear Gucci to feel good*

BY ELIZABETH AUSTIN

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? You do. We all do. Don't we?

One week in August, the game show "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" came in second, third, and fourth in the Nielsen ratings—topped only by "Survivor," in which 16 strangers agreed to spend almost six weeks marooned together for the chance to win $1 million. Rounding out the top five was "Big Brother." A "Survivor" clone for agoraphobics, it offers a piddling top prize of $500,000 to 10 "guests" willing to endure three months of house arrest under the unblinking eyes of 28 TV cameras.

So what's wrong with that? This country's on an unprecedented economic roll. Why not flaunt it? And if I don't like the glorification of wealth, why don't I just roll up the newspaper, turn off the television, and ignore it?

I try. Really, I try.

I roll my eyes in moral superiority when I read about nouveau riche mummies and daddies draping their tots in $400 cashmere coats by designer Sonia Rykiel. I shudder at the furnishing and upkeep costs of those sprawling new McMansions cropping up down the block. I have long, earnest talks with my two young daughters about integrity, about privilege, about following your heart instead of filling your wallet.

But sometimes in the middle of the night, I lie awake doing endless math problems: Three years until college, minus the home equity loan, divided by my failing desktop computer, added to our looming IRS bill, multiplied by the broken air conditioner on the minivan. In those dark hours, when those grim equations encircle my pillow, I come up with only one response—I've been a stupid, irresponsible fool. What's wrong with me? Why didn't I invest in the market in 1982? How are my children going to get through college without a debt load that will follow them into middle age? Why didn't I ever get a real job, with stock options? If I'm so smart, why am I not rich?

These financial nightstalkers visit my friends, too. By day, they're bright, hard-working, talented people, with nice homes, reliable cars, and generally happy families. But when, insomniac, they hear the downstairs clock strike two and three, they feel like they're the only chumps in America who don't have a comfortable million or two stashed away in a high-yield mutual fund.

Half-envyingly, I read about young, earnest foreign service officers who are being plucked from the financial obscurity of the State Department by the golden claws of Goldman Sachs. I feel a bittersweet pang when my seven-year-old eagerly describes her planned career as a marine archaeologist; when she's a little older, will she find more romance in day-trading? I hope she'll have the courage to pursue a life and career that offers satisfactions beyond a fat paycheck. But I don't know. It's so easy for her to turn on the television, or pick up a magazine and lose herself in those seductively portrayed trappings of wealth that make our home seem scruffy by comparison. Maybe some day she'll look at me and see one of life's also-rans, a mere scribe who lacked the ambition to sashay downtown and commandeer one of those six-figure public relations gigs.

## Mom, Dad, and *Money* Magazine

Take financial advisor Suze Orman's breathtaking title: *The Courage to Be Rich*. What does that make the rest of us? Cowards? (In case you missed it, Orman reveals that "money is attracted to people who are strong and powerful, respectful of it, and open to receiving it." Thanks. That explains a lot.) Would-be financial heroes can receive Orman's gospel courtesy of our high-minded friends at PBS, which has starred the financial guru in two hour-long specials. Stay tuned for next season's BBC import: "Upstairs, Further Upstairs."

ELIZABETH AUSTIN *is a writer living in Chicago. Her article "Saving the Home from Martha Stewart" appeared in the December 1999 issue of* The Washington Monthly.


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our thinking has become so distorted that being comfortably middle-class now feels like the next step to actual poverty. In one recent survey on "Money and the American Family," the AARP found that one in three adults believes a family of four with an income under $50,000 is poor—and one in five considered an annual income of $200,000 as the bare minimum required for wealth.

We don't want all this dough for ourselves, of course. It's the kids we're thinking about. Leaf through the ads in *Money* magazine and you'll find a whole nursery full of dimpled youngsters. The little sweetheart dancing in her socks on Daddy's big shoes is fronting for Chase Vista Funds, while the youngster out sailing his toy boat works for American Century Investment Management. A sleepy newborn touts Barclays Global Investors. An intent little fisherman helps the Northern Fund trawl for new customers. (The only discordant adult note in this lullabye is struck by the handsome couple who've hit the sheets for E*Trade. Their post-coital bliss is captioned: "Imagine rolling over and saying, 'That was better than investing.'")

The ads shamelessly target worried, conscientious parents. And boy, do they have our number. One ad, for MetLife Financial Service, shows a father joyously lifting his little son high up in the air, while the caption muses: "I want to make sure they never have to carry me." A similar note is sounded by the TV commercial for Scudder Investments: "What if your kid gets into Harvard? What if your mother needs long-term care? What if they happen at the same time?" The worst-case scenario is illustrated by one grim little ad for Conseco Life Insurance that asks: "How do you plan on providing for your family after you pass away?" The grave of the improvident parent is marked by a tombstone reading "Your ad here."

But let's be honest. We're not planning to hand all of our millions (real or coveted) straight to the kids. We're bullish on the way we define the necessities of life. In 1982, the average new home sold for $84,000, according to the National Association of Home Builders. Last year, the average sale price was $196,000. Much of that increase was due to inflation—of the house. In 1982, the average buyer got 1,710 square feet; last year, the average size of a new home was 2,225 square feet. And 17 percent of the 1.31 million new homes built last year boasted 3,000 square feet or more.

We're simply unwilling to make do with the charming bungalows and modest Cape Cods our parents once cherished. As proof, look at the growing number of teardowns—unpretentious to moderately swanky homes in desirable older communities that have been demolished to make room for oversized manses whose most prominent architectural feature is the gaping maw of a four-car garage. The NAHB estimates that 100,000 of these so-called replacement homes went up nationwide last year. In Hinsdale, an elegant, 120-year-old Chicago suburb, almost 17 percent of its vintage housing stock has been knocked down over the past decade and a half. In the Seattle area, the bumper crop of mansionless technomillionaires led to a reported 4,000 teardowns last year alone. Delta Airlines chair Gerald Grinstein paid $8 million for Bill Gates' old house, a 60-year-old estate on the shores of Lake Washington—then promptly bulldozed it to the ground for a new $3 million structure.

**Baby boomers used to denounce middle-class morality and bourgeois standards. Now we realize they were quite sincere in rejecting middle-class values; they all really wanted to be rich.**

### Mr. Blandings

It's not surprising that an $8 million house is no longer enough to satisfy the housing needs of the super-rich. We've spent the last 20 years being told that the best isn't nearly good enough.

Look at the way Hollywood sequels insist on giving all their characters an upgrade to first class. In the 1948 classic, *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*, Cary Grant played a Manhattan ad man making a very comfortable $15,000 a year. Carried away by the sylvan charm of the Connecticut countryside, he ends up sinking $38,000 into a nice, roomy, Colonial-flavored home. The "Blandings house" (which was actually constructed for the film) proved so pretty and so practical that the architectural plans were sold publicly, and 70-some copies of the three-bedroom house were built across the country. But when Hollywood revisited the Blandings saga with *The Money Pit* in 1986, our hero was suddenly a hotshot entertainment lawyer, and the house

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was a huge mansion on Long Island's North Shore.

Or consider the more recent bracket shift imposed on another favorite film, *The Shop Around the Corner*. In director Ernst Lubitsch's hands, it was the story of two Budapest shop clerks living in furnished rooms, workplace rivals who unwittingly become anonymous pen pals and slowly discover that they're soulmates. At the movie's end, star Jimmy Stewart gets a promotion to store manager—and the hand of pretty coworker Margaret Sullavan. He doesn't win the Hungarian lottery, or find out she's an heir to the Hapsburgs; he just winds up with a few extra coins and a smart, spunky, angel-faced little wife. Back in 1940, that was enough to qualify as a happy ending.

But in the 1998 update, *You've Got Mail*, director Nora Ephron transforms the two high-minded clerks into Meg Ryan, owner of a small children's bookstore on the Upper West Side, and Tom Hanks, heir to a huge chain of megabookstores. They're hardly colleagues. In fact, he eventually succeeds in driving her out of business. But don't worry. Thanks apparently to some supremely benevolent ATM, Meg manages to keep her chic, sunny apartment and maintain her Starbucks habit. And when her endearing erstwhile nemesis comes courting, there's never any doubt that she'll yield. After all, he's rich and stylish, and magnificence is the only Aristotelian virtue the movies really appreciate. (Justice, courage, and temperance aren't nearly so photogenic.) Since Hanks has a nice fat checkbook in the pocket of his Armani pants, he is, by definition, lovable. So as the music swells and the closing credits roll, it's clear they'll soon be joyously inking a prenup. The financial bliss doesn't stop there. Jean Stapleton, the elderly bookkeeper who's left unemployed by the bookshop's demise, has no worries; she bought Intel at six. So *You've Got Mail* provides lots of happy endings—millions of 'em.

On the small screen, producers like to shower their characters with all the trappings of affluence, even when the gap between their wages and their lifestyles is wide enough to spark an IRS audit. In "Friends," a personal shopper and her sous-chef roommate manage to maintain a funky, charmingly decorated two-bedroom apartment in downtown New York. And the young marrieds in "Mad About You"—a mid-level publicist and a documentary filmmaker—have snagged a spacious flat filled with genuine Stickley furniture. When we're shown life among the lowly (those with, say, less than $150,000 annually) they're appalling, whether they're the fictional characters in "Roseanne" or "Married with Children" or the real-life working-class people who grace the stages of Jerry Springer and Queen Latifah's talk shows.

It's instructive to spend an evening tuned to Nick at Nite, a cable channel dedicated to reruns of 1960s sitcoms. In watching a marathon presentation of "The Andy Griffith Show," I was struck by the show's warm-hearted depiction of everyday life. Andy Taylor, the town sheriff, lives in a little house with his son and maiden aunt; he doesn't even own a lawnmower. His best friends are a barber shop owner, a car mechanic, and his own deputy, and his girlfriend is an underpaid schoolteacher. By today's standards, they're barely middle-class. Yet Andy is a strong, proud, dignified, and well-respected man.

Or take the "Dick Van Dyke Show." Rob Petrie is a college-educated man with a good job as head writer for a hit comedy show. But he lives in an ordinary suburban home, and Laura is clearly keeping house on a comfortable but limited budget. In *Watching TV: Four Decades of American Television*, Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik note that the show presented "a world not very different from the one most [white middle-class] viewers faced. Rob and Laura lived in a real middle-class town in which real people commuted to and from real jobs." Even now, I hear echoes of my own household concerns in the script—as when a tearful Laura confronts spendthrift Rob about his insistence on picking up the check every time they go out with friends. "Don't you want our son to go to college?" she wails. Thank God Laura never had to leaf through the ads in *Money* magazine; she'd have had a nervous breakdown.

OK. It's true that the "Dick Van Dyke Show" was not a documentary—just as most Depression-era moviegoers did not share in Carole Lombard's perplexing struggle to find the right butler. The point is that we once had a wider, more realistic array of aspirational models, both in the media and in real life.

## Aaron Spelling and the Big Back End

For this, I partly blame color television. In black and white, a spartan interior can look elegant, while a cluttered room seems comfy and cozy. In living color, however, spare is drab, and homey is tacky. The economics of television also play a major role. When producers such as Aaron Spelling dazzle viewers with sumptuous sets and extravagant costumes, they're actually making a sharp business decision. If you distract the audience with high-priced eye candy, they may not notice the flatness of the script. And while that $8,000 designer dress or $15,000 Florentine brocade sofa may boost a show's initial cost, neither is likely to demand back-end participation when the series moves into


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

international syndication.

The media landscape has changed in other ways, as well. Back when Preston Sturges sent Joel McCrea slumming through *Sullivan's Travels*, the reading public got a wide-angle view of the world through general-interest publications such as *Life* and *Collier's*. Now, magazines are niche-marketed, and the upscale readers of *Money* simply aren't interested in hearing how the other 80 percent lives. It's hard to imagine advertisers vying for space on the pages of *Limited Aspirations Monthly*.

In fairness, we can't blame the media alone for the perpetual ratcheting-up of our desires. Movies and television are only magic mirrors that reflect and refocus our own visions. As David Brooks explains in *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, the rise of the educated class boosted the stakes in the status game. The Bobos (bourgeois bohemians) define themselves by their rarefied consumption. The '50s-era host who offered a choice of "red" or "white" has been replaced by an amateur sommelier who delights in dazzling his guests with an array of cabernets, syrahs, barberas, and pinots both noir and gris. These high-end consumers would be mortally offended by any suggestion that they've gone over the top. And since they've become the nation's tastemakers, the rest of us nod wistfully and wish we had extensive wine cellars too.

By C. Larson

The conundrum is how to cover the wealthy and celebrated without celebrating wealth itself, how to keep us informed about life at the top of the economic food chain without setting up a feedback loop of unlimited envy. A glitzy little story is fun once in a while, like sprinkles on an ice cream cone. But a steady diet of them leaves us fretful and discontented, forever dissatisfied with our own portion of abundance. We find ourselves nodding in agreement with the young mother, quoted in the *Post*'s Style section, who complains: "Being frugal is not what everyone talks about when you go out. It's what did you buy, how much did you pay, and do they have any left?"

To be fair, there are a few media outlets (other than this one) that claim to take a different tack. Time Inc. recently launched *Real Simple*, a magazine allegedly dedicated to the promotion of Cheap Chic, etc. But one scornful reader suggests the subtitle: "How to Buy Yourself a Minimalist Lifestyle." When such faux back-to-basics types aren't hawking the expensively sleek doodads needed to achieve the *Real Simple* lifestyle ("If you own too many panties, camisoles, and demicups to fit in one or two dresser drawers, take your storage system to the next level: Buy a lingerie chest. Or two."), they're celebrating those high-minded souls who took their $3.6 million in stock options and opened an ecologically aware bed-and-breakfast in Vermont. Or they're profiling hyperstingy housewives who saved $162.50 last year alone by whipping up a weekly meal of "Refrigerator Stew," an amalgamation of all their leftovers, and forcing it down their families' throats with a cheap, easy-to-assemble plastic tube.

Another major factor in our perverted view of the American Dream is the worldly success of the journalists who write all these articles. Reporters used to be working-class stiffs who would have snorted at the thought of paying someone $65 an hour to clean out your closets. (Imagine Mike Royko heading down to Pottery Barn to pick up an extra lingerie chest.) Now, a *New York Times* reporter with two years' experience pulls down a minimum of $1,360 a week, according to Newspaper Guild figures.

As journalists have moved up the economic food-chain, they've lost their knee-jerk identification with the values and realities of working-class life. Instead of casting a sardonic glance through the window that divides the wealthy from the rest of us, many reporters now leave damp noseprints on the glass ceiling. Take, for example, the *Post*'s appreciation of the late philanthropist Paul Mellon. By any measure, Mellon was a most admirable billionaire. (You've got to love a guy who tells a high-school graduating class: "What this country needs is a good five-cent reverie.") But to underscore Mellon's lack of affectation, his appreciator solemnly intones: "His jet wasn't new."

When reporters are assigned to cover those funny

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little people toiling away down there in the middle classes, they tend to confuse Style with Snottiness. One particularly nasty example was a *Post* piece on the benighted folk who buy "genuine oil paintings" to match their living room sofas. "For just $12, you get an 8-by-10-inch oil painting—real oil paint, paint piled so thick on the autumn tree, the meadow flowers, that you could clean your fingernails with it," the writer snickered. "Genuine. Authentic. 'No glass,' say connoisseurs of hotel-function-room art. 'No glass means class.'"

Warmer-hearted writers try to give the un-rich the sympathy they deserve. One 1996 newspaper story still burns in my memory. In *The New York Times'* award-winning series, "The Downsizing of America," we read the tragic tale of a middle-aged man who lost his high-powered job. He was left with only a $300,000 savings account, a $130,000 severance check, an aging Mercedes, and a roomy ranch house with a pool in the San Fernando Valley. The author solemnly detailed how the emotionally wounded former exec was trying to make ends meet on his wife's $30,000 salary, plus the $25,000 or so he earned in temporary jobs. Their daughters, who lived at home, made about $40,000 between them, but didn't contribute to the household expenses.

Now look. I've been there. My dad and my husband have both lost good jobs to recession and downsizing. I know first hand how wounding un- or underemployment can be to a man whose self-esteem rests on his ability to provide for his family. But when I read the *Times* story, I see a family of four living on a combined income of roughly $95,000, plus almost half a million in savings. An American Tragedy? Please.

## Up—And Up And Up

It's hard to find any hint that regular middle-class life might be pleasant, honorable, or desirable. Part of this, I think, stems from all those baby boomers who used to stand around college quads and denounce middle-class morality and bourgeois standards. Now, seeing them in middle age, we realize they were quite sincere in rejecting the middle class; they all really wanted to be rich.

Maybe I have an unusual take on this. I'm an unabashed fan of the bourgeoisie. Both my parents grew up in working-class families in Mayberry-sized towns. While I have a wholehearted respect for my grandparents' thrift and their lifelong work ethic, I also know how dowdy, constricting, and culturally barren their world could be. I have absolutely no romantic notions about real life in the exit lane. Yet having watched my grandparents lead long, productive, satisfying lives without ever making a single purchase at Crate and Barrel, I'm sure that you don't need a multimillion dollar bank account to bring up successful, happy children and lead a contented, honorable life. Whenever I cast a jaundiced eye on my serviceable but uninspiring dining room rug, or gaze speculatively at our ripe-for-renovation bathroom, I can hear my grandmother's voice scolding gently in my ear, "Much wants more."

Look. I don't want to be rich. I am plum delighted to live in a pretty nice house in a pretty nice suburb. And I don't want to lead a simpler life; I've worked too hard to amass this modest level of complexity, thank you very much. I just want to carry on in my little niche without feeling like America's biggest idiot every time I take an unwilling glance at my svelte bank account. And I'd like to hear a few voices talking about what's right with the choices I've made. Because there are a lot of people who have made the same choices, and it's shameful that so many of us are staying awake at night wishing we could revise our lives. Even worse, our children are inundated by media messages whispering that anyone who isn't rich is a loser—and that includes Mom and Dad.

It's darkly ironic that our rejection of homespun virtues and our worship of the new affluence are pushing some poor souls to the brink of poverty. Some months ago, the *New Yorker* ran a sad little story by a young writer named Meghan Daum. In it, she confessed that she'd based her college choices on the alma maters of the privileged brides featured on the *Times* wedding pages: "Columbia rather than NYU, Wisconsin rather than Texas, Yale rather than Harvard, Vassar rather than Smith." After graduating (from Vassar) she spent seven years in New York pursuing her vision of life as an urban sophisticate—a vision distilled over a couple decades of scrutinizing style sections, fashion magazines, movie sets, and similar avatars of affluence. Wryly, Daum explained how she managed to spend herself into $75,000 of debt by indulging in such stylish necessities as fresh flowers, Starbucks coffee, and pricey white wine—all easily affordable items, if you happen to be a bookstore owner named Meg Ryan or a waitress on "Friends." Admittedly, Daum's tale of self-inflicted financial woe gave some readers a severe case of the yips. But I think there's something desperately wrong when a smart, pretty, funny, talented young woman feels compelled to court financial ruin in the name of stylish living.

It's time to demand a more attractive group of role models and a more attainable definition of style and


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

success, that reflect an authentic American mix of taste and ingenuity. We don't need *The New York Times'* helpful articles explaining how to train our butlers, or fire our personal trainers. What we desperately require are some fresh new thoughts on how to leaven our overworked daily lives with some healthy doses of affordable elegance and achievable chic. We need to make heroes out of people who have shown the courage not to be rich, like my young friend who left Wall Street to become an English teacher, simply because he loves books more than he loves money.

We need a few national cheerleaders for ordinary life. Whenever I feel overwhelmed with my nagging financial anxieties, I pull out my worn copy of Jean Kerr's *Please Don't Eat the Daisies*, a collection of warm-hearted, witty essays about middle-class suburban family life. Published the year before I was born, it describes the challenges and pleasures of my life in a way that I can't find anywhere in the current media. If a glance through the real estate section leaves me dissatisfied with my four-bedroom, 1.5 bath, 1,600 square-foot fixer-upper, I can restore my sense of perspective with Kerr's law of real estate: "All the houses you can afford to buy are depressing."

When a high-end travel magazine reports that a week (the minimum stay) at the Golden Door costs $5,375, and the newly trim and revitalized writer assures me that it's worth every penny, I long for another Jessica Mitford, whose 1966 report on her week at a ritzy Arizona spa ended with this calculation: "I had lost five pounds, at $200 per pound." Despite the Hon. Ms. Mitford's upper-class English background, she had a witty, sensible, middle-class voice, and it's one I desperately miss.

I'm not suffering from misplaced nostalgia. The way we view ourselves, the things we hold up as desirable—these have a tremendous impact on our social and political life. Look at the recent debate over the abolition of the inheritance tax. It's mindboggling that the middle class didn't rise up in a body and denounce the idea of handing an estimated $850 billion dollars to America's rich kids over the next 20 years. I think we were all embarrassed to admit that the only way we're likely to end up owing such a tax would be by going all the way with Regis Philbin—six times.

I realize that our reach has always exceeded our grasp. The principle that anyone can become a millionaire is a basic part of the American character; we prefer not to notice that, while everybody theoretically can make a fortune, most of us don't. Nevertheless, I think there's something terribly amiss when the former pinnacle of the American dream is redefined as the minimum standard. We need to celebrate the entire journey, not just a destination that most of us will never reach.

Right now, the only place I see anything vaguely resembling my own life is on "The Simpsons." Sure, Homer's an idiot and Bart's a brat. But in the Simpsons' Springfield, I see people who go to work, go to church, go to the grocery, attend school plays, take occasional family vacations to Disney World, and generally enjoy the discreet charms of middle-class existence. I love Marge's heartfelt belief that money can't buy happiness, and little Lisa's marrow-deep distrust of corporate America. Even though Homer is always cooking up some harebrained get-rich-quick scheme, he's never particularly distressed when they don't pan out. You never hear Marge complain about the millions her husband and children have managed to accumulate and squander within the limits of a 22-minute TV episode. Despite their wacky adventures, they're a mostly happy, mostly contented, middle-class family much like my own—except, of course, that we exist in three dimensions.

**I just want to carry on in my little niche without feeling like America's biggest idiot every time I look at my svelte bank account.**

We need more shows like "The Simpsons" (preferably starring characters that don't have primary-colored skins.) We need to hear what's right about middle-class life. Because markets fall. Businesses falter. Booms go bust. And when adversity comes, as it inevitably will, we'll need a value system that doesn't blame the victim for lacking the courage to be rich. We shouldn't kick ourselves for failing to amass the $30 million that one of my friends says you need to be "bulletproof." When those canny marketers at Scudder Investments ask what we'll do if we find ourselves facing college tuition payments and nursing home bills, we need to answer boldly: "We'll think of something. We'll have faith. We'll all work together, and we'll get by."

Oh, how incredibly middle class. ●



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# The Green Monster

## *How rich sports makes poor sports*

BY JONATHAN ROWE

THERE IS A SENTENCE IN PAUL WEILER'S *Leveling the Playing Field* that telegraphs his pitch. Weiler is talking about the goal of his proposals to reform professional sports. "Just as we know from other areas of institutional governance," he writes, "sports leagues have to be designed in a fashion that not only fairly distributes the existing financial pie but also generates an expanding pie—again for the benefit of fans as well as owners and players."

That's the economic catechism in a nutshell—the assumed beneficence of an expanding pie. Weiler doesn't show exactly how this bigger pie will benefit fans, and that's the point. To the economic mind the assertion is true by definition, and no further discussion is required.

But perhaps it is. Perhaps the standpoint of the fan is different from that of owners and players—and of policy experts like Weiler. Perhaps it requires a different metric. Just possibly fans want a better game, which is not the same as more money sloshing through the proceedings—which is what economists mean by an expanding pie.

That is the question raised by (though not in) Weiler's book. Though it deals overtly with professional sports, actually it is about much more. The standpoint he embraces—the conventional Anglo-American economic model—has become the lingua franca of public policy and debate. Whether the issue is medicine or antitrust, prisons, schools, or even the protection of the earth, the question increasingly is not, "What do we need to do?" Rather it is, "How can we make this part of life look more like what the economics textbooks say?"

In sports the point comes through with special clarity. Sports derive from a realm of value that lies outside the preoccupations of the market. (So too do the crafts and professions generally, but less obviously so today.) Teamwork, loyalty, a pride in craft for its own sake, a rootedness in place—economists regard such qualities as Medieval relics, and clogs in the cosmic gears of market efficiency. Yet they remain important for the rest of us; and so the language of the market jars in a way it doesn't when the subject is say, lignite production or microchips. We feel more confidence in asking whether the agenda implicit in the model is going to take us where we really want to go.

*Under review...*

**LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD: How the Law Can Make Sports Better for Fans**

*by Paul Weiler*

Harvard University Press, $29.95

Weiler will make many more confident still. He makes a number of good suggestions, and his heart is in the right place. But ultimately he ends up demonstrating why economics doesn't have all the answers, and why increasingly it misses the point. When it comes to money, folks, sometimes we've just got to say no.

### Roots

Pie aside, pro sports are a mess. Players whine over seven-figure salaries; corporations saturate the proceedings with ads; billionaire owners shake down local taxpayers for stadiums and arenas; and the rich—both individual players and entire franchises—get richer, while those in the middle get crumbs from the table. Fans meanwhile have to pay over $45 a seat, on average, to take the kids to an NBA game, not counting parking, and concession prices that rival those at Dean and Deluca.

Sports are a metaphor for life all right; and it's little wonder that people from the sports world seem to gravitate increasingly to Washington these days. They've had a lot of practice. (Usually they come as conservatives who, having gotten rich in taxpayer-financed arenas, proceed to rail against the use of taxes to help anyone else.) As in politics, moreover, the common denominator to the many ills is money. The more there is, the worse things seem to get; and this raises problems for a belief system that regards the accumulation of money—the expanding pie—as the first good from which all others flow.

JONATHAN ROWE *is a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Weiler is a professor at Harvard Law who is a frequent expert source for sports reporters and a consultant in labor disputes. He is the kind of person whose views help shape both what happens in the sports business and how the media portrays what happens. This makes *Leveling the Playing Field* significant as a window on the kinds of changes that are within the framework of respectable opinion at this time.

The book is divided into two sections. The first deals with what one might call the "social" issues, such as gambling, drug use, and violence by players. The second deals with money issues, the ones that fall within the scope of labor law and antitrust (Weiler's specialties) at least. As a text and primer on the issues, *Leveling the Playing Field* does an admirable job. If you have puzzled over the difference between a hard and soft salary cap, or wondered why the antitrust laws affect major league baseball and basketball differently, or why big-money NBA stars such as Michael Jordan and Patrick Ewing sought to decertify their player's union as a blow against the owners, then Weiler's your man.

There is also a rich lode of fact and lore. Many fans probably are not aware, for example, that in an early incarnation of major league baseball the players actually owned the teams. They may not be aware either that Robert Moses, the late and infamous New York City highway czar, was the real villain in the move of the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles. (Walter O'Malley, the late owner, has gotten most of the blame. But O'Malley wanted to build a new ballpark near a mass transit hub in Brooklyn. Moses wanted one in Queens near his beloved freeways, and he killed the deal.)

### On The Bench

Though moderate and judicious, Weiler is basically a player's man. The owners take the larger share of hits, and not without reason. For decades they exploited players shamelessly, and continue to show a chronic aversion to the high road. There is Michael Eisner for example, head of Disney-ABC, which owns the Anaheim Angels baseball team. Eisner tried to suspend Tony Phillips, the team's second baseman, who was caught trying to buy cocaine from an undercover cop. Yet months later Eisner awarded the biggest contract in TV history—$1.25 million per episode—to Tim Allen, the star of ABC's sitcom "Home Improvement," the TV show, even though Allen recently had served 18 months in jail for selling cocaine.

It's not hard to see why players get their backs up. Weiler gives particular attention to the stadium shakedown scams, which represent money grubbing of the rankest order. Did Paul Allen, the Microsoft billionaire and owner of the Seattle Seahawks football team, really need the taxpayers of Washington state to front $325 million to build a new stadium? Does George Steinbrenner, owner of the New York Yankees, really need charity from the taxpayers of New York, many of whom don't even follow baseball?

**Magic Johnson gave up coaching because he couldn't stomach the attitude that money bred.**

Another practitioner of this low-grade avarice, of course, was George W. Bush. As part-owner of the Texas Rangers baseball team, Bush managed to overcome his principled opposition to taxes long enough to campaign for a local tax increase to build a new stadium for his team. Then his group sold; and Bush's $600,000 stake turned into some $15 million. (The stadium deal inspired a local Republican attorney to say of Bush, "He's not an entrepreneur. He's a welfare recipient.")

Such episodes do not inspire confidence in the captains of American business, which team owners generally are. At least the stadium machinations are somewhat out in the open. We can only imagine what transpires when these same people write their soft money checks to the major political parties—or in Bush's case receive them. Yet while the owners are the protagonists, it is only fair to point out that the players happily pocket the resulting loot. Instead of objecting to these deals on principle, the players use them to justify their own outrageous pay. "You've got owners who threaten to leave town unless they get a new stadium," said Keyshawn Johnson, a wide receiver for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. "Please, don't give me that [expletive] about a contract I signed."

I have a hunch that many players do have reservations. In the mid-1980s, Larry Bird, in his sly hick manner, grumbled publicly about the way television controlled the pace of the game, with constant time-outs for ads. He was quickly quieted; you don't mess with the pie. As readers of this magazine already know, labor unions,



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

like the business groups they oppose, gravitate to the lowest common denominator of self-interest. So the players, as a group, generally go for the money, just as the owners do.

Still, players and owners have this essential difference. If the pro leagues did not exist, many of the players would be on playgrounds anyway. The owners would not be wheeling and dealing with Rotisserie teams. A reporter for *The Boston Globe* asked Jerome Allen, a former college star trying to catch on with the Celtics, why he kept battling the odds. "It is the easiest job in the world," Allen said. "I love to play. I would play basketball for free."

That is the truly weird thing about the pro sports morass. The games are sinking into a money sewer. Yet most players really would play for much less, if everyone else was making less too. They demand more because the money is there, not because they really require that much to play. In this they are much like corporate CEOs, who demand outrageous pay packages because compliant boards are willing to offer them.

There is a third party in the drama, of course: the agents. Weiler does not deal with these, and it's a major omission. They are the true Iagos in the script, the whisperers and fomenters who make certain that things go from bad to worse. Agents get a cut of every contract they negotiate; they are like contingency lawyers without the redeeming social benefit of encouraging safer products. The necessity of dealing with some of those creeps could bring out the worst in most of us. If Dante were writing today, the fourth ring of his Inferno might well contain owners and agents, rolling their weights of lucre in a semi-circle, beating up against one another and shouting imprecations, only to circle back and shout again.

Weiler's failure to discuss agents, by the way, is an omission that sports writers generally make as well. They rarely report on agent machinations, nor mention how much the agent gets from behemoth player contracts. Agents are prolific gossips and quote machines, and my guess is that sports writers look the other way to stay on their good side.

The only party without representation in these tawdry proceedings is the fans. Weiler doesn't propose to change that. Instead he offers expert advice on ways to alter the machinery to make things better for the fan. On the whole his proposals are sensible, as far as they go. On the social issues he advocates drug testing for players, for example, and argues that the sports leagues should treat crimes such as spousal abuse as seriously as they do the use of drugs. On the economic front—his forte—he proposes a "stadium cap" on subsidized stadiums to go along with the salary caps on players' pay. He also urges floors on team payrolls, so that particular owners can't field patsies and then make a bundle from their share of the league's national broadcast revenues.

Other proposals struck me as less promising. I'm not sure that individual gambling licenses, with all proceeds reported to the IRS, are going to solve the epidemic of sports gambling. I'm also not convinced that concern about cocaine and other illegal drugs is overblown because players have other personal habits—such as over-eating—that also diminish performance. He is right, however, that performance-enhancing drugs, such as androstendiore, are at least as bad for sports as are performance-diminishing ones like cocaine.

## Fanfare

As the kind of quasi-adult who still reads the sports pages first, I expected *Leveling the Playing Field* to be a great read. Instead it was slow going. This is partly due to Weiler's methodical and unemotive lawyer style. Even when he gives an anecdote, it somehow doesn't feel like a story. But the main problem, substantively as well as stylistically, is his embrace of economic expertise. Economics is the Big Thing in the legal academy, and this is not necessarily a great thing.

Like most who resort to economics, Weiler seems to assume that it is simply a neutral analytic tool, like a stethoscope. But in practice it functions as a tendentious vocabulary with the agenda built in. Once you have defined sports as a "product" and fans as "consumers"; and once you have agreed that their devotion to their teams is a form of "consumer welfare" and that free agency is the best way to achieve "allocative efficiency," you have not just committed an aesthetic atrocity. You have put yourself on a conceptual conveyor belt that leads you inevitably back to the very problems that you are trying to solve.

You also have divorced yourself from what it means to be a fan in the first place. On the question of free agency—the ability of players to sell their services to the highest bidder once their contract runs out—Weiler has this to say: "If we must choose just between the traditional reserve system and unrestricted free agency, the latter is a far better instrument for improving sports welfare—whether viewed as allocative efficiency in enhancing the quality of the game for fans or distributional equity in sharing games between owners and players."

I don't know many fans who think way in terms of "allocative efficiency." (Personally, I tend to favor inefficiency, such as when pitchers bat; it produces more



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drama and surprise.) Nor would all agree that when the Dodgers departed Brooklyn "the overall level of sports welfare was enhanced."

The problem here is not just language. It goes to the Johnny-One-Note world view embedded in the language, which reduces all human yearning to a cost-benefit model. In this belief system money serves as both means and measure, so there is no point of reference outside itself. What does "sports welfare" mean? Essentially it's just a literal-minded reckoning of the amount of money that is changing hands. This is the implicit agenda of economics—the accumulation of money—but whether it has anything to do with fans is another matter entirely.

Weiler purports to speak on behalf of us fans. But we enter the script the way we do in economics texts, as abstracted entities rather than as actual people. We are relegated to the role assigned us in the economic master script—as passive consumers of a product called "sports." We never get to speak for ourselves. Thus Weiler can assert with confidence that the free agency has improved our "welfare," and that the sports "product" has improved immeasurably in recent decades. Why? Because we consumers are spending so much more money on it.

In the master script, the expenditure of money is tantamount to speaking, and pretty much the only way we get to speak. The more money we spend, the more approval we have spoken. Well, I'm a fan, and the money I've spent on outrageous ticket prices doesn't say that. It says only that I was smitten at an early age and that love dies hard. It says that, somehow, I still see the face I fell in love with many years ago. Sometimes you pay what you have to and put up with a lot you detest—especially if you have kids and they really want to see a game.

And there's a lot to put up with. Not only are the prices high. The incessant huckstering and promotional frenzy degrades the whole experience. The day I write this, a letter in *The Washington Post* complains about the electronic noise level at Washington Redskins games. "The repeat spoon-fed cheers and almost nonstop, extraterrestrial noise level is totally out of line," the writer says.

### The Trouble With Money

It doesn't take a Ph.D. in economics to see the problem here. (It might help not to have one.) Suppose the money slosh in pro sports were to double tomorrow. Top NBA contracts would be in the vicinity of $160 million over seven years. Average pay in baseball would be $3.2 million. Does anyone think the game would become twice as good, and sports generally twice as rewarding to follow? Or would things get even more bogged down in petulant wrangles over the shares of the pie?

To pose the question is to answer it. Pro basketball is practically parabolic in this respect. By the late 1970s the league was in a sorry state. Fans were losing interest, drug use among the players was rampant. Then Magic Johnson and Larry Bird came along, with their yin-yang personalities and college championship rivalry. More importantly, the hard times bred an unusual level of cooperation. Players and owners agreed on a contract that capped salaries and declared a reasonable split of revenues between the two camps. The result was a decade of euphoric growth in revenue—a bigger pie—which in turn produced the players' strike of 1998, and a money grab the pathologies of which have rippled down to the school yards.

**The pie may be growing, but fans have to experience the cesspool inside it.**

There is an almost Scriptural cycle here—the tendency of material success to produce spiritual and moral failure—that the economic mind has great trouble grasping. Beyond a certain point money can make something worse instead of better; one might say there can be a diminishing marginal utility to an expanding pie. The owners and players get to divvy up the loot; the economic model might work for them. But fans have to experience what's in the pie, as opposed to the monetary representations of it. They get a sneaker hustle so shameless that a former Nike rep called it a "cesspool." They get the giant Coke bottles that deface the light stanchions on the legendary Green Monster wall in left field of Boston's Fenway Park.

Fans also get stadiums and arenas named for corporations. When the Boston Garden became the Fleet Center, Candlestick Park became 3-Com Park, and RFK Stadium in Washington became Fed Ex Field, that too was part of the expanding pie, because the corporations paid. ($205 million in the case of Federal Express.) How does one measure the scar to civic culture and to memory that results from this kind of commercial defacement? Economists don't factor it into their reckonings of "allocative efficiency," but they should.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then too there's the effect upon the games themselves. There are still good players and great games. Pedro Martinez, the Boston Red Sox pitcher, with his slight physical stature and Little Leaguer's ardor, provides as much pure baseball joy as I expect to experience in this life. (You can guess where I'm from.) But if you sense that money has taken something out of pro sports, you are not alone. Magic Johnson gave up coaching the L.A. Lakers, for whom he had starred, after a short stint. He couldn't stomach the attitude the money slosh had bred. "When somebody says something to you [i.e. a player], you can either take it or leave it," Johnson said. "You don't have to respond and they know that. Things like coming to practice on time and all that, they just don't care."

I have a feeling that Weiler senses some of this. His instincts are basically good. But the argot tends to trap one in its own assumptions—and you have to talk this way to be taken seriously in the public policy realm. That means we won't begin to find answers—to the pathologies of pro sports or to economic problems generally—until we disengage from conventional "economics" with its tendentious language and circular logic. To fans, sports are not a "product." They are games; and it is not possible to speak for fans unless one is willing to speak as one.

This means, among other things, withdrawing consent from the role of "consumers" that the policy experts have assigned us. We fans should not have to sit by passively during bargaining sessions waiting to find out how much money we are going to pay and how much more degradation we are going to have to endure. If the players can have a union and the owners can have a league, why can't fans have a union too? Ultimately we pay the players' salaries and the owners' profits. We pay for the stadiums and the TV broadcasts and the ads that fill them. (Actually non-fans do too, as Weiler points out, since the costs are built into the prices of many things we buy.) Shouldn't we have a real voice in what we pay for?

## Let The Fans Bat

I'm not talking about government regulation here. I'm talking about the opposite—a place at the table. If fans had a seat at the table, a whole range of new solutions could be on the table. We could talk about ticket price caps, concession price caps, advertising-saturation caps, and TV time-out caps as well as salary caps. We could talk not just about who pays for the stadiums, important as that is, but also about such things as the Astroturf carpets that fill them. We could restore the civic poetry of stadium names—the Boston Garden, the Polo Grounds, Ebbetts Field, Candlestick—in place of the grim commercial realism of Enron Field and 3-Com Park, which are the capitalist equivalents of Stalingrad and Leningrad. (Sports writers could decline to use these corporate names, and should.)

Not least we could talk about the rules of the game. The baseball owners—to take just one example—continually have compromised the game to produce more home runs. They have lowered pitchers mounds, flattened the seams on the balls, moved in fences, shrunk the effective strike zone to a wisp. (We can be thankful they haven't gone to aluminum bats—yet.) Owners may own the leagues; but we fans in some sense own the games. If baseball truly is the "National Pastime," then shouldn't we Americans whose time it passes have a voice in what passes?

The single best way to achieve this is so simple it could happen tomorrow: Fans should be able to own teams themselves. Not just billionaire fans such as Daniel Snyder, the new owner of the Washington Redskins, who is busy trying to buy a championship (which is a problem in itself). I mean ordinary fans who could pitch in relatively modest amounts.

This is not a fantasy. If there is a professional sports team in America that exemplifies what sports are supposed to be about, it is the Green Bay Packers football team. Though based in a relatively tiny city, the Packers have become a legendary franchise. There have been Super Bowl victories, and players describe a "family" feeling on the team. It is not coincidental that the Packers have a unique ownership structure. There is no big-shot owner. In Green Bay the fans own the team through a nonprofit corporation.

If anything can save pro sports in this country it is an arrangement like that. Yet the Green Bay Packers could not join the NFL today. None of the major leagues will permit a franchise with a broad fan ownership. They want you only if you are an individual owner and your goal is to make money—that is, to expand the pie. That's a dead end. The answer is not to return to the old days when owners could exploit the players. It is, rather, to focus on the game rather than the pie which fans would do. The whole endeavor could be scaled down, money-wise, with no loss to the games or fans and probably with a great gain for both.

There is a scene in the movie "North Dallas Forty," about the Dallas Cowboys football team, in which a massive lineman, fumes: "When we call it a game, you call it a business. And when we call it a business, you call it a game." He was right. The balance has tilted too far towards the money and we've got to tilt it back. So let's chuck this "sports welfare" and "allocative efficiency" business and play some ball. ●


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# The Son Also Rises

## *From Caney Fork to Capitol Hill, Al Gore has never stopped striving*

### By Jon Meacham

NEARLY A DECADE AGO, JUST BEFORE Al Gore joined Bill Clinton on the 1992 ticket, I happened to spend a day with the young senator back home in Tennessee. I was a reporter for *The Chattanooga Times* and had been assigned to do a "day in the life" piece on Gore; we spent most of a Friday, as I recall, driving through the Sequatchie Valley, from town meetings and elementary school visits in places like Jasper and Dunlap. Lots of hands to shake, questions to answer, little towns to see, calls to return (we had to stop at a gas station to do that; this was still essentially a pre-cellular era). The senator had been promoting *Earth in the Balance*, which he actually wrote himself; was commuting between Washington and the state; and had his mind on the Earth Summit in Rio. It seemed a grueling pace, and I remember asking him how he juggled everything—the Senate, family, fund-raising, book writing. "You just keep after it," the senator replied. "You don't waste time."

*Under review...*

**THE PRINCE OF TENNESSEE: The Rise of Al Gore**

*by David Maraniss and Ellen Nakashima*

Simon & Schuster, $23.00

Al Gore has rarely frittered away a moment. The basics of his biography are familiar: the capital childhood in the Fairfax Hotel; the tough summers of farm work in Carthage; the diligent study at St. Albans and Harvard; the anguished choice to go to Vietnam; the years in the newsroom of *The Tennessean*; the decision to run for his father's old House seat at the age of 28. Though his dad was only a senator and George W. Bush's made it all the way to the White House, Gore has led the vastly more interesting political life, from listening to President Kennedy talk about the Cuban Missile Crisis to navigating conservative waters in the South at the apex of Ronald Reagan's popularity. Yet the vice president is not merely a driven electoral automaton; he's an intriguing human being. Together with Bill Turque's excellent *Inventing Al Gore*, David Maraniss and Ellen Nakashima's *The Prince of Tennessee* sheds light on an important slice of modern American political history, for the rise of Al Gore is about more than a seemingly stiff Sunbelt boomer who might be president. It's also a compelling (yes, compelling, not a word you often see associated with Gore) personal story of ambition, anxiety, and ambivalence unfolding amid the great events of our time: the Cold War, the civil rights movement, Vietnam, the Reagan Revolution, and the Age of Clinton.

In the tradition of *First in His Class*, Maraniss' magisterial biography of Clinton, *The Prince of Tennessee* began in the pages of *The Washington Post*, and it deftly carries the reader through the stages of Gore's life. Expectations were high from the start. He was born on March 31, 1948, almost a decade after his sister Nancy. Pauline Gore said they "had almost despaired of having another child, much less a son" and thought of the baby as "kind of a miracle." From then on, it seems, Al was essentially the center of the Gores' world, both in the Fairfax and in Carthage during the summers. In his acceptance speech in Los Angeles a half century later, he tellingly noted that "when I was a child, it never once occurred to me that the foundation upon which my security depended would ever shake."

The implications of that certitude are complicated, and in that apparent confidence lie the origins not just of Gore's ambition ("We raised him for it," his father said when Gore was nominated for vice president) but of his uneven public style (the tendency to lecture, the occasional stiffness). The sense of destiny is clear. It would have been hard not to think of politics as a career when you grew up in Suite 809 of the Fairfax, dropping water balloons on limousines waiting on Embassy Row and annoying Sen. John McClellan, who lived downstairs, every time you dribbled a basketball. "Official Washington," the authors note, "was as much of a small town in its way as any backwater spot in Tennessee, with its

JON MEACHAM, *a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly, *is* Newsweek's *managing editor.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own rituals and mores and circle of families." And so young Al played in the Senate pool, sat on Vice President Nixon's knee, and lived in a hotel where Robert Kennedy would dine downstairs at a back table in the Jockey Club with Cuban refugees.

A wonderful life, unimaginable to most Americans of his (or any) generation. But you can also see the beginnings of the cautious, sometimes overly formal Gore in those early days. He wasn't particularly free to be a kid, or to screw up. This is a boy whose shopping trips to buy a bow and arrow with his dad ended up in the paper, and supper wasn't just supper. "If we had important people," Mrs. Gore later said of dinner parties in the suite, "... I liked for Al to be able to be there. I selected guests for us; if it so happened there was a great guest who was a good conversationalist and the issue was proper for me and my son, then I would see if I could wedge Al in."

**Gore learned that politics is an eternal struggle between the principled and the practical.**

Al was almost always surrounded by grown-ups, and learned early how to charm and impress. In this he shares a childhood legacy with Franklin Roosevelt, another beloved son of older parents who could get along with adults but had a harder time with his contemporaries. The boys at Groton thought the young FDR was affected and too eager to please. (His boisterous Oyster Bay cousins tartly referred to Franklin as "Miss Nancy.") Maraniss and Nakashima paint a similar portrait of the young Gore. On a field trip to Andrews Air Force Base when Al was 10, the St. Albans bus broke down, and his classmates scampered around an open field while they waited for another. Young Gore approached a science teacher, Alexander Haslam, and solemnly asked: "Sir, is this the time to be rowdy?" Another teacher recalled Gore as "a dutiful son ... It was almost unnatural for a boy to be that well behaved." The other boys noticed, too. In his high-school yearbook the editors archly captioned a cartoon of Gore as a heroic statue with a quotation from Anatole France: "People with no weaknesses are terrible."

There is another wrinkle here, too. As Turque and Evan Thomas wrote in the pre-Democratic National Convention issue of *Newsweek*, the Gores' place in the Washington village was more precarious than legend would suggest. Voters are fickle, and the permanent capital culture in which former lawmakers continue to make their homes—and very comfortable livelihoods—in Washington even after being turned out at the polls did not take hold until the '70s and '80s. For the Gores, defeat might have meant a retreat from Massachusetts Avenue to Smith County. This is not to say that Sen. Gore was not a man of courage: he was, ultimately losing his seat in 1970 for championing civil rights and opposing the war in Vietnam. But he was a politician, and there were twists and turns on the road to his noble last stand. One example: While he bravely refused to sign the pro-segregationist Southern Manifesto in 1957, the senior Gore won reelection after voting against the 1964 Civil Rights Act (a vote he later said he regretted, and he did support the Voting Rights Act a year later.) The lesson for young Al, who watched it all up close: Politics is an eternal struggle between the principled and the possible, and even good men sometimes make the wrong choice. The important thing is to stay in the arena, never getting too far ahead of the voters.

So Gore was raised in a world that was at once serene and slippery, which may help explain his formality and his weakness for boasting. Southerners—strangely, I think, given that five of the 10 postwar presidents have come from either the old Confederacy or a border state—remain insecure about their place in the larger world. That's one reason why the Southern chapters of Ivy League alumni associations are so active, and that a Southerner is sometimes more likely to drop where he went to school (if it were, say, St. Paul's and Yale) a bit more quickly than someone else might. Politicians from the old Confederacy share the same anxiety, and usually react one of two ways. On one end of the scale is Huey P. Long, the rumpled "Kingfish" of Louisiana who came from humble roots and never let you forget it. On the other is Cordell Hull, FDR's secretary of state, who climbed out of obscurity in Tennessee and didn't want you to know it. "Judge Hull," Maraniss and Nakashima write, "was invariably formal and correct, as if to insist that he never be taken for a hillbilly from the hollows of middle Tennessee." Gore Senior idolized Hull, and adopted "the same formal bearing for the same reason, but then slightly exaggerating it: always in a dark suit, white shirt, and tie; courtly, but rarely relaxed in public,

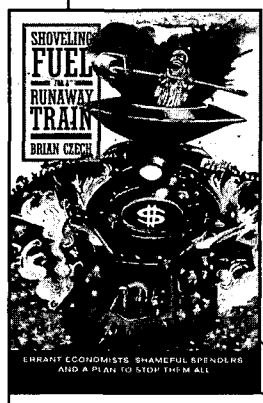

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little small talk or informality, always on, speaking in complete sentences full of Latin-rooted words, as if his thoughts were being recorded for history." All these years distant, the son emulates Hull, too, and not just in terms of style: "Many of Hull's basic political convictions—his belief in progressive taxation, internationalism, and free trade—were bequeathed to Albert Gore," the authors note, "and then to son Al."

The father gave the son all of that, and more. Young Gore's interest in weapons of mass destruction had its beginnings in Sen. Gore's fascination with the subject. One contemporary remembers spending a few days with Al at Harvard and hearing him talk about a trip of his father's to a weapons storage facility where "as far as the eye could see there were canisters and tanks holding nerve gas and substances so deadly that an amount equal to an egg in the water supply could kill the whole world." As the 1970 election neared, Al joined the Army and spent time in Vietnam. It was a difficult choice, and Maraniss and Nakashima record a conversation between Gore and Richard Neustadt, the Harvard presidential historian who had privately tutored the senator's son. Al sought the professor out on the question of what to do about the war; Neustadt remembers telling him: "If you want to be part of the country 25 years from now, if you want any future in politics, you've got to serve." Later, on the night Bill Brock defeated Gore Senior, the old man left the stage at Nashville's Hermitage Hotel with the words: "The truth shall rise again."

Nobody really doubted what the old senator meant. The son went to Vietnam, returned to Nashville, worked for John Seigenthaler's newspaper, dabbled at divinity and law at Vanderbilt. Much has been made—chiefly by Gore himself—about his disillusionment with politics in the early '70s, and there's no question that in November 1970 he was not quite ready to step into his role as family avenger. On the other hand, he was just 22, and only six years would pass before Seigenthaler would call him with the news that would change his, and Tipper's, life forever. Dad's old House seat was open. Gore hung up, turned to his wife and said, "I'm going to run for Congress," then dropped to the floor to do push-ups. Tipper, who had no inkling this was coming, was stunned. "I wanted to faint," she said later. "They would have to bring me back with smelling salts." Her ambivalence about politics would not diminish with the years. On the eve of the 2000 convention in Los Angeles, after a quarter century in public life, including eight years as the wife of the vice president of the United States, Mrs. Gore told *Newsweek* that "the campaign is a very important part of my life, but it's something that's happening in my life. It's not my life."


**SHOVELING FUEL FOR A RUNAWAY TRAIN**
*Errant Economists, Shameful Spenders, and a Plan to Stop Them All*
**Brian Czech**

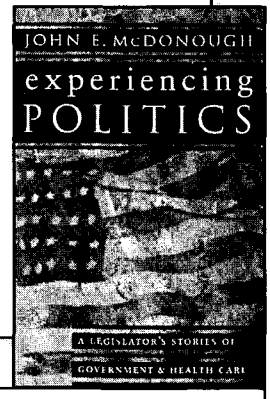



"Czech has given us a fine mix of economics and ecology, tempered with a lot of common sense."
—Herman E. Daly, author of *Valuing the Earth: Economics, Ecology, and Ethics*

$22.50 CLOTH

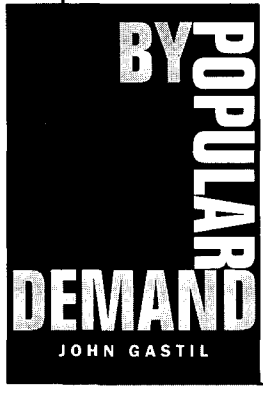
**EXPERIENCING POLITICS**
*A Legislator's Stories of Government and Health Care*
**John McDonough**

"McDonough's spirited account...carries two powerful messages: scholars have reason to care deeply about the consequences of the governing processes they research and —here's the shocker—a healthy peppering of political science can actually help practitioners become more effective policy makers."
—Mark A. Peterson, UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research




*California/Milbank Series on Health and the Public*
$50.00 CLOTH $19.95 PAPER

**BY POPULAR DEMAND**
*Revitalizing Representative Democracy Through Deliberative Elections*
**John Gastil**




"*By Popular Demand* tackles two important issues—increasing political participation and restoring trust in government—that are critical to the future of American democracy. ...His solutions are worthy of our careful consideration."
—Mark Baldassare, author of *When Government Falls*

$48.00 CLOTH $18.95 PAPER

**At bookstores or order (1243) 842165 • www.ucpress.edu**
**University of California Press**




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The young Al Gore was different, not only from his father but from the young man he'd become in his early and mid-'20s. Gone was the searching Harvard intellectual, gone was the crusading reporter, gone was the son of a liberal senator. Gore and another young politician making a race that year, Arkansas' Bill Clinton, sensed that this was not the moment for progressive rhetoric. Ronald Reagan was running well in the Republican primaries, and Jimmy Carter, a conservative Democrat, would only barely defeat President Ford in November. As Clinton put it, "Our people generally are in a conservative mood." When Gore asked a childhood friend from Carthage, Steve Armistead, for advice, his old pal went straight to the point: "I've got two things to tell ya," he said. "Get a haircut and buy some clothes." According to Maraniss and Nakashima, "In an instant, it seemed to the others, Gore had three new blue suits, new shirts, new shoes, no stringy sideburns, shorn hair, a new residence (moving from a Nashville apartment replete with beaded curtains and a waterbed to a suburban ranch house on 88 acres across the Caney Fork from his parents)." His positions underwent a parallel makeover. The Gore of 1976 was anti-abortion rights, pro-gun, and called homosexuality "abnormal." He would move, slowly but steadily, back to the middle and to the left as the '80s and '90s wore on, but the lesson of that early race stuck: do what it takes to win.

Clinton's and Gore's paths would not really cross again in a meaningful way until 1992, when the longtime Arkansas governor chose the Tennessee senator to run with him. Gore drove a hard bargain, asking for, and getting, "spheres of interest" within the administration. He's been an eager veep, driven by the same ambition that fueled him from his earliest days. His aides, write Maraniss and Nakashima, "sensed in him an overpowering need to prove to Clinton that he had made the right choice, that he could offer invaluable help, compelling him to attend every meeting, master every issue, keep abreast of every personnel decision, and prove that he was at least the second smartest person in the room." The book reports that "Gore was near the doorway of the Oval Office when Clinton told him that he did not have sex with Monica Lewinsky. As soon as Clinton turned around, a look of disbelief crossed the vice president's face." Yet he stuck to the script and stood by his man. For Gore, a more important story was unfolding in 1998—his father lay dying in Tennessee. When the end finally came, in December of that dark political year, Gore was by his father's side. "Always do right," the old senator whispered as he slipped away.

It was a hectic time, and Maraniss and Nakashima close their account with the voice of Steve Armistead, the old Carthage pal who sensed that his father's death, the scandal in Washington, and the coming presidential campaign were aging his friend. "On the phone, I could just tell by the tone the condition he was in," Armistead says. "He was at the house and Miz Pauline was hollerin' at him to come and eat. You could tell by the sound of his voice that he hadn't had time." Yet Al Gore kept after it, and isn't wasting a moment. His father would be proud. ●


FOLLOW IN FAMOUS FOOTSTEPS...

*The Monthly* is seeking applicants for Fall/Winter internships. These [illegible] aspects of magazine production, including business, writing, [illegible] have gone on to careers at *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street* [illegible] *New York Observer*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, [illegible] *Time*, *The New Republic*, *Slate*, *Brill's Content*, the State [illegible] Justice, and the White House. Applicants should send a cover [illegible] samples to: **Tara Mansbridge, Publisher, *The Washington Monthly*** [illegible] **NW, Washington, D.C. 20009,** fax us at **202/332-8413**, or [illegible] **monthly.com.**

...INTERN AT THE MONTHLY




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# It Takes Two

*Tipper and Laura aren't Hillary, and why that's good for Al and W.*

## By Eleanor Clift

ONE OF THE LEAST TALKED ABOUT challenges facing the candidates for president and vice president in this election is getting the spousal relationship just right. America does not want to see a "Father Knows Best" marriage of the 1950s (think Ike and Mamie Eisenhower); nor is it fully prepared for a Me Jane, You Tarzan power-sharing duo like the Clintons. Happily for George W. Bush and Al Gore, they seem to have found mates who split the difference. Laura Bush and Tipper Gore are strong personalities, far from the demure damsels in the shadows of presidents past, yet they are simultaneously supportive, shoring up their husbands' weaknesses with their own strengths. If Laura and Tipper could change places with their husbands, Laura would inject a needed dose of seriousness into the GOP, and Tipper the likeability that is lamentably absent on the Democratic side.

Hillary's giant step toward expanding the possibilities for a first lady earned her equal portions of admiration and hostility from a public coming to grips with major social change against a backdrop of renewed longing for traditional roles. The women of the 2000 race will tread more carefully. But they are compelling personalities in their own right, and the legacy they leave will reflect the tugs and pulls of the baby boom generation. Boomer women's résumés reflect the advances women have made in the workplace. But the leavening effect of growing older has prompted some rethinking of spousal roles in a more traditional framework.

Nowhere is this more obvious than on the campaign trail. "The women seem more human, more approachable, more rounded, more like the rest of us than the men," says Barbara Whitehead, a co-director of the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University. "But they are cast in very familiar roles, and they're staying far away from the big issues of the day. It's an interesting strategy."

And it's not only that. Mothers on the youthful side of boomerdom, who are just beginning to work through the nightmare juggling act that having kids and a career demands, are apt to resent the Hillary model for its insistence on having it all, when sometimes this just isn't possible. Even women who are more capable than their husbands find that they are the ones making the bulk of the career sacrifices when the kids arrive. It may be nature, it may be nurture, it may be right, it may be wrong—but it happens. We're not quite ready for Hillary: What we're ready for is the smart, independent, thoughtful Mom who has seen the virtue of sacrifice in the interest of a healthy family—and who has managed to do this without turning herself into a doormat.

### First Wives Club

Both Bushes are 53 years old and in the vanguard of the baby boom. But their experiences as members of the largest and most narcissistic generation are quite different. Where George Bush floated through life on a magic carpet of entitlement, Laura Bush's life is notable for its wifely sacrifice—an old virtue suddenly made new again on this year's campaign trail. Whether it's an antidote to Hillary Clinton or the mellowing of a generation, Laura Bush is not alone in embracing the traditional role. Al Gore is living out the script written for him by his father because Tipper Gore made the real-life sacrifices that allowed him to pursue a political career without hindrance.

The two women serve as character witnesses for their husbands, and the media have so far given them a pass on controversial issues. Laura Bush has declined, for example, to elaborate her position on abortion and the death penalty, two areas where some suspect she may hold different views from her hus-

---

ELEANOR CLIFT *co-wrote her most recent book,* Madam President: Shattering the Last Glass Ceiling, *with her husband, Tom Brazaitis.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

band. Al Gore's shifting stand on abortion rights has been well documented, but Tipper's evolution in thinking has gone unexamined. The women in the spotlight this year don't seem quite so out of reach to voters, the way Hillary did in 1992. They are intelligent and they have degrees, but they fit more comfortably into the life patterns of ordinary women. Hillary was a superstar with outsized aspirations, and she made voters uneasy. "We warm to women who are independent-minded," says Whitehead. "But women, especially, are deeply ambivalent toward a woman who presumes to make policy."

There have been numerous biographical stories about both Al Gore and George W. Bush, yet neither candidate is particularly interesting or strong on a personal level. They haven't had to overcome great hurdles and the occasional insights they share with the public tend to sound poll-driven. When Bush's

# Who's Who

*By Susan Threadgill*

**Tom Daschle** won a recent poll of congressional staffers as the Best Leader in the Senate. According to the *Washingtonian*, the magazine that conducted the poll, "Daschle pulled more than twice the votes GOP runner-up [**Don**] **Nickles** did—and a quarter of Daschle's votes came from Republicans."

Other winners were **Barney Frank** as both the Brainiest and Funniest member of the House, **Tom DeLay** and **Barbara Mikulski** as the meanest, and **Trent Lott** for "Weakest Spine" and **John McCain** for "Strongest Backbone" in the Senate. One winner that outsiders never would have guessed was **Jesse Helms** for "Just Plain Nice." But the only senators who drew votes from both sides of the aisle in this category were **Thad Cochran** and **Joe Lieberman**.

As preparations were underway for the presidential debates, the press was full of rumors that the **George W. Bush** camp was not eager to have their candidate debate with **Al Gore** on prime time. There was little hard evidence to support the rumors, but the *Wall Street Journal* did report "The Republicans favor Sunday morning talk shows." Then came the actual Bush proposal which included two shows, each of which is shown on just one network, and one of which is—surprise, surprise—**Tim Russert**'s "Meet the Press" on Sunday morning.

To celebrate **Bill Clinton**'s 54th birthday, the White House staff threw a party on the South Lawn. The entertainment was a lecture by Chief of Staff **John Podesta**, advising the president on how to prepare for life outside without White House chefs, limos, and Air Force One. Among the visual aids presented by Podesta were color charts showing how to order from a Chinese menu and a photograph of an airline boarding pass: "You actually need one of these to get on the airplane." He also explained about red lights. "Red means stop, yellow means slow down, actually green means go—except when driving in New York yellow means hit the gas."

By now everyone knows that **Al Gore** wrote his own acceptance speech. But who wrote **George W. Bush**'s? The answer is a former *U.S. News & World Report* staffer, **Mike Gerson**.

Was there a connection between the Big Kiss and what many people think was the best speech of **Al Gore**'s career? We can't be sure, but it does appear that **Tipper** played a role in an earlier high point in her husband's life, his NAFTA debate with **Ross Perot**. The story is told by **David Gergen** in his new book, *Eyewitness to Power*. Earlier in the evening, Gergen and Gore staffers **Jack Quinn** and **Michael Shehan** had been trying to help the vice president rehearse, but Gore appeared "frozen" and they came close to despair about his prospects. As they were ready to get in Gore's car to go to the debate, Quinn said to Gergen: "Don't get in the limo. You and I and Michael should all ride in the backup. Let Tipper get in there alone with him."

Gergen continues. "Now I don't know what happened in those next 20 minutes. But I can say that when Gore got out of that limo on the other end, he was transformed. **Clark Kent** had turned into **Superman**. He was ready to crush Perot."

We have to admit that we haven't had too many nice things to say about **George W. Bush**, but on one issue we're 100 percent with him. He hates cell phones. One of his staffers told **Paul Bedard** of *U.S. News & World Report*, "There's no more heinous offense" than having your cell phone ring in his presence, especially during a meeting.


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heavy drinking and immature behavior threatened his marriage, friends say it was Laura who forced the issue. Bush quit drinking and has stuck to sodas since. He credits his wife with smoothing his rough edges. "Not all of them," she interjected in their joint appearance on "Larry King Live," quickly adding that she was kidding.

Al Gore presents himself as the model father, but it was Tipper who set aside her dreams of becoming a therapist to stay home and raise a family. As a new mother, she managed to launch a fledgling career as a newspaper photographer. After her husband abruptly announced he was running for Congress, she gave up the job to join him on the campaign trail. When her crusade for parental-guidance labels on rock music records threatened potential donors to Gore's 1988 presidential run, Tipper cut short her book tour promoting, *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society*,

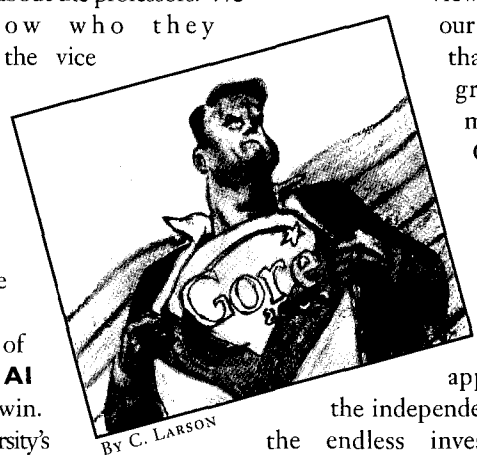
On the other hand, "**Al Gore** loves to strap a cell phone on his belt and even answers others when they ring."

When **David Dreier**, a Republican congressman from California, attended a candidate's school in 1978, he ran into **George W. Bush**, who told him, "I've got the greatest idea of how to raise money for the campaign. Have your mother send a letter to your family's Christmas card list. I just did and I got $350,000!"

These pages have not been notable for their praise of **Ken Starr**, but the man does have a good side. A recent article in *The Washington Post* reveals that Starr has been showing up "at Anacostia High School every week for the 9 a.m. class in constitutional law." Anacostia is a largely black and largely underprivileged area and Starr has been volunteering his services.

Did this year's vice presidential nominees come as a surprise? To most of the media pundits they did—and to a lot of others as well. **Al Kamen**'s "In the Loop" column in *The Washington Post* has a devoted following among this town's political junkies. Early this summer, he announced a contest to see who could select both vice presidential nominees. Not one guessed both candidates. Only ten picked **Joe Lieberman**. And just two predicted **Dick Cheney**. So much for the Washington wise guys!

If the Washington wise guys aren't so wise, how about the professors? We don't know who they picked for the vice presidency, but we do know—courtesy of Reuters—their predictions for the November election. All of them say **Al Gore** will win. Emory University's **Alan Abramowitz** says Gore will get 53.2 percent of the major party vote; **Christopher Wiezien** of the University of Houston and Columbia's **Robert S. Erikson** say 55 percent; **James E. Campbell** of Buffalo University says 52.8 percent; and **Thomas M. Holbrook** of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee predicts a whopping 60.3. That would almost certainly produce a Democratic majority in Congress. **Dick Gephardt** must feel the speaker's gavel in his hand.



By C. Larson

We think **Hillary Clinton** will make a dandy senator, but we have to concede that her political judgment is not all that it might be. Her speech at the Democratic convention hogged too much prime time in the opinion of everyone we've talked to. And **David Gergen**'s new book confirms **George Stephanopolous'** view (outlined in our May 1999 issue) that she made the greatest political mistake of the Clinton administration—the decision to stonewall on Whitewater which led to the appointment of the independent counsel and the endless investigation that plagued the Clintons for the next five years. Gergen says: "She should have said yes [to the full disclosure of Whitewater documents] from the beginning, accepting short-term embarrassment in exchange for long-term protection for herself and her husband." Why didn't **Bill Clinton**—who had told Gergen "I believe we should turn over all the documents"—overrule his wife? Our best guess is that it was because just before the stonewall decision was made, *The American Spectator* and the *Los Angeles Times* published the Arkansas State Troopers' accounts of the president's sexual misconduct, and Bill Clinton was, like most husbands in similar hot water, in no position to argue with his wife.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and stopped speaking out about cultural issues. Tipper's willingness to be part of the team is unbounded, yet she discovered that once the race was over, a spouse gets relegated to the sidelines. "Campaigns are for the two of you, an equal partnership, but then you wake up, and he's been elected to office," she said in a 1994 interview with the *Chicago Tribune*. "It's a rude awakening."

Given the number of times Tipper, 52, has sublimated her wishes to accommodate her husband's career goals, you'd think she'd be the dour one in the marriage. Yet it's Tipper who supplies the bubbly in the 30-year Gore union. And she doesn't hoard her sparkling personality for her family. Her gift for making human connections stands out in contrast to her husband's corseted personality.

Laura Bush's primary project has been fixing her husband, but she also has a life independent of his whims and wishes. When he joked once too often that, as a librarian, her idea of a speech is to say, "Shhhhh," she retaliated by noting that he, as someone who restricts his reading to executive summaries, thought a bibliography was the biography of the person who wrote the Bible. Don't be fooled by Laura's demure image. She is the first governor's wife in Texas to have an office in the state capitol, and she has made good use of the proximity. Her lobbying efforts won passage last year of a bill earmarking $17 million for Head Start reading programs, and she organized the Texas Book Festival, now in its fifth year, which has raised $900,000 for the state's public libraries. When her husband gets too cocky and self-important, she deflates him: "Bushie, you're not president yet."

Tragedy makes people grow up, and tragedy touched Laura Bush when she was 17 and ran a stop sign in a new Chevy, hitting another car and instantly killing one of the occupants, a young man who was a classmate and a friend. No charges were brought, and the police report filed at the time showed no evidence of drinking. But the searing experience shrouded the young woman with a reserve that few can penetrate. Friends of 20 years in Texas say they had no inkling of the accident until they read about it in a tabloid earlier this year.

If there's an analogy in Tipper Gore's life, it was the mental illness that hospitalized her mother periodically and robbed her of the family life she yearned for. Her own brush with depression following her son's car accident in 1989 deepened Tipper's appreciation for life outside of politics. Though no policy wonk in the Hillary mold, Tipper passionately cares about her causes—expanding the acceptance and treatment of mental illness, and treating the homeless with respect. A long-standing activist, she marched for civil rights, for anti-war candidate Eugene McCarthy, and against the Vietnam War. Gore no doubt shared her sympathies, but caution born of having a prominent father prevented his injecting himself fully into the fray.

If she didn't understand her husband's reticence then, she does now. As a political wife, she can't always express what she is feeling, or thinking. She is an appendage, and her role is to be supportive. That's when Tipper picks up the camera and becomes an observer of her own life. On the night of her husband's victory in New Hampshire, Tipper turned her camera on the crowd before introducing her husband. Her self-portrait, published a few years ago in a book of her photographs, shows a shadow next to a tree. "People can read into that photograph what they wish to," she said in 1998, her half-smile anticipating the jokes about her husband's wooden persona.

At Southern Methodist University in Dallas in 1968, when Laura Bush graduated, the campus was untouched by the nation's huge social upheavals. Realizing how sheltered she had been, Laura gently chided her father for programming her to be a teacher when she could have taken advantage of the expanding opportunities for women and gone to law school. But then, she told *The New York Times*, she didn't really want to be a lawyer. Championing the possibilities while choosing a more time-honored path is a balancing act familiar to both women in waiting.

## Politics' Uxorial Advantage

The wives of the vice-presidential candidates present different perspectives on the continuum of First Ladyhood. Hadassah Lieberman, whose father and first husband both were rabbis, easily made the transition to political wife. The Liebermans' yin-yang partnership fits the times. Hadassah would flesh out husband Joey, as she calls him, even more, except that he's a regular guy to begin with. Lynn Cheney, on the other hand, is more at home under the lights than her reticent husband, who is accustomed to speaking "on background" under the anonymity of "a senior official." Probed by a *Los Angeles Times* interviewer in 1990 about why she disliked questions about being the wife of Dick Cheney, she replied, "Well, I only mind it when I think that I am sitting here answering those questions, and nobody is over at the Pentagon asking Dick what it is like to be married to me." A journalist and author of some renown, Cheney wrote an article in 1985 for *Washingtonian* about "The Decline of the Dutiful Wife." High-powered women weren't that

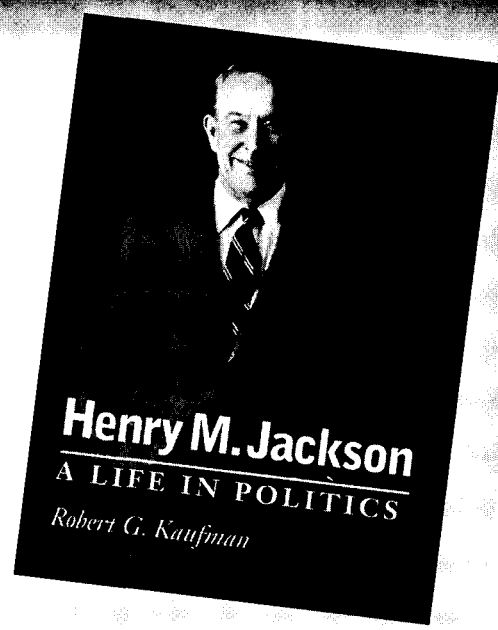

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

common in the 1980s, and Cheney's professional women friends used to laugh together about the fact that their husbands sometimes made dinner for them.

The Cheneys just missed being baby boomers (Lynne turned 60 in August), and her bio is in the high-achieving Hillary mode. Unlike the others, she has had policy roles. She also ranks lowest on the warm and fuzzy scale. It is not a coincidence, says Whitehead. "When they get into substantive issues and policy, immediately we don't like them." Yet Lynne seems to have slid easily into the supportive spouse role, one she has played in the past. Hard as it is to believe today, the ultra-serious and monotonic Dick Cheney flunked out of Yale because of bad grades. It was Lynne, his high-school sweetheart, who coaxed him back to school at the University of Wyoming, where she earned a doctorate in literature and, well, he made it through. When his political career took off, Lynne admitted to *The New York Times* in 1979 that she sometimes had difficulty concentrating on her own work because his was so fascinating. "It takes a real effort of will to step back and tell myself I'm going to teach this seminar on Matthew Arnold's poetry," she said.

Appointed chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities by President Reagan in 1986, Cheney relished her role as culture cop. She vetoed a film project about the genocidal impact on Native Americans resulting from the 1492 voyage of Columbus, and noisily challenged the wave of political correctness sweeping the nation's campuses. When Governor Bush set about to reform education in Texas, he pronounced the curriculum "mush" and summoned Cheney for advice on beefing up the basics. There is speculation that if Bush wins in November, he might find a job for Cheney in his administration, perhaps as Secretary of Education.

Of these four women, Cheney has chafed most at the secondary role accorded political spouses, and is surely the most eager and the best equipped intellectually to enter the arena and debate on her terms. Yet she is likely to be the least visible on the campaign trail. Cheney can't open her mouth without creating controversy; that's why she was for a long time a favored fill-in host on CNN's "Crossfire," subbing for conservative Pat Buchanan. But she's also least likely to appear because, while all these women are billed as the anti-Hillary, Cheney is the one who really is quite a bit like her. One gets the feeling that Cheney has to restrain herself from grabbing the microphone and declaring, Alexander Haig-like, "I'm in charge here." And that's just not what the country wants right now. ●


**Henry M. Jackson**
*A Life in Politics*
Robert G. Kaufman

"Nearly twenty years after the death of Senator Henry M. Jackson, the nation's capital still has a large number of people who proudly identify themselves as 'Scoop Jackson Democrats'—'Scoop Jackson Republicans.' This biography of one of the greatest senators of this generation is worthy of its subject. Which is to say, the book, like the man, is formidable, balanced, invaluable and just."—George F. Will

Emil and Kathleen Sick Lecture-Book Series in Western History and Biography

Clothbound, $30.00

Available at your bookstore or call 1-800-441-4115

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS
P.O. Box 50096,
Seattle, WA 98145-5096
www.washington.edu/uwpress/


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Political Booknotes

## Reversing Reagan

**By Michael Waldman**

As you drive past the Ronald Reagan Federal Building in Washington to Reagan National Airport, it is sometimes hard to remember just how extreme, even radical, the Californian appeared when he plunged into big-time politics in the 1960s. Today we remember him as a twinkling grandfather, wrapping hard-edged policies in "there you go again" gauze. But when he first ran for public office, defeating incumbent governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown by one million votes in 1966, he was the avatar of an angry backlash—a precursor to the campaign waged by George Wallace two years later.

In *The Right Moment*, a history of the Reagan-Brown race, Matthew Dallek marks a moment very different from our received memories of the 1960s. For all the "Behind the Music" documentaries and Baby Boomer nostalgia, the most important political legacy of that turbulent decade was a sharp turn to the political right. After that 1966 election, Dallek argues, liberalism has never been the same.

This is a refreshing and well-written book, and it tells a good story. It focuses unapologetically on electoral politics, chock-full of striving candidates, scheming local officials, and colorful party operatives—all of which would mark it as highly unfashionable in many academic history departments. There are signs of a backlash among the youngest of historians, a return to history in the grand style reflected not only by this book but by Jeff Shesol's *Mutual Contempt* (about the LBJ-RFK feud), among others. Interestingly, both Dallek, who now works for Richard Gephardt, and Shesol, who works for Bill Clinton, went into speechwriting rather than academia.

Today's Democrats are still grappling with the anti-government tide that began surging in 1966. Pat Brown represented the self-confident liberalism of the post-New Deal decades. He was the "giant-killer" who beat Richard Nixon and drove him to his "last press conference" in 1962. He built California's public university system into the best in the nation, spent lavishly on public works and improvements, and championed civil rights. Californians are still living off the social capital accumulated during those years.

**THE RIGHT MOMENT: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point In American Politics**
*by Matthew Dallek*
Free Press, $25.00

Brown foundered not on taxes, or the economy, or even on the Vietnam war, or the other issues we think of as being Reagan's battle flags—but on social disorder. The Watts riots in 1965 shocked moderate voters, and the Berkeley student protests, such as the Free Speech movement, were seen by middle-class voters (in Reagan's words) as the work of a "neurotic minority." More dramatically, violent crime had risen sharply in the years before the election. Voters saw Brown as temporizing, as unable or unwilling to impose social order on an increasingly unruly state. Reagan opposed civil rights legislation, denounced "beatniks," and dropped broad hints about his views of racial issues. It was this quest for order, and the first stirrings of the unfortunate white backlash, that provided the fuel for Reagan's ascent.

The Ronald Reagan we see here was, in many respects, fully formed, speculating about a White House run even before he won the GOP primary. His outburst at a debate, storming out when he thought his integrity had been challenged, seems like a tryout for his later "I paid for this microphone!" theatrics. Then as later, his opponents underestimated him; Brown foolishly intervened in his primary to try to defeat a moderate GOP rival on the theory that Reagan would be easier to beat. His opponents have always loved to laugh at Jack Warner's famous line: "Ronald Reagan for governor? No, Jimmy Stewart for governor. Ronald Reagan for best friend."

Above all, Dallek shows Reagan not as an empty-headed actor memorizing lines, but as an intensely serious right-wing ideologue, and a gifted proponent of his views. The anti-government tide that began surging in 1966 has been the most powerful political force of the last 40 years. We saw it in the flood of white Democrats into the Republican party in the South, and in the tax-cut wave that began with California's Proposition 13 in 1978 and became the supply-side policies of 1981. It has set the terms of debate. With the Contract With America, this anti-government movement crested and, just as quickly, receded. Clinton and Gore certainly have believed their mission, in part, was to find a way to drain off the anti-government energy. This year, for the first time in decades, no presidential candidate is echoing the language and arguments first heard in Reagan's 1966 race. Perhaps the era of anti-big-government is over.

Michael Waldman, *former White House director of speechwriting, is the author of* POTUS Speaks: Finding the Words That Defined the Clinton Presidency.

## Curious Ron

**By Timothy Noah**

Ron Rosenbaum is my favorite practitioner of mass-market, glossy-magazine journalism. He might have a serious rival. If Tom Wolfe were still a frequent writer of magazine nonfiction—but even then Rosenbaum would probably be my favorite. Like Wolfe, Rosenbaum has stretched the boundaries of the form—but at a time when the form is especially resistant to accommodating anything that isn't a celebrity profile. In magazines like *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Rolling Stone*, Rosenbaum has written on such subjects as the obscure later fiction of Charles Portis (known to most people, when he is known at all, as the author of *True Grit*); the doctrinal disputes among the translators of the Dead Sea Scrolls; the Byzantine conspiracy theories of a flaky investigative journalist named Danny Casolaro who committed suicide (or was he murdered?) while on the verge, he claimed, of breaking his biggest story; and an evangelical preacher's claim that he can get the


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lord to fill cavities at revival meetings.

Glossy magazines, of course, aren't completely inhospitable to running stories on quirky and/or challenging subjects. But I can't think of a magazine writer, other than Wolfe, who's explored so wide a variety of disciplines and subcultures over the last three decades while working, for the most part, outside the rarified precincts of *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and the tiny handful of other unprofitable prestige magazines.

**THE SECRET PARTS OF FORTUNE: Three Decades of Intense Investigation and Edgy Enthusiasm**
*by Ron Rosenbaum*
Random House, $29.95

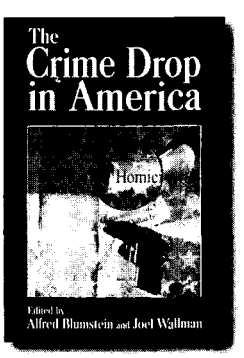
Rosenbaum currently writes a weekly column for the *New York Observer* called "The Edgy Enthusiast." It isn't quite as good as his long magazine pieces, but it's one of my favorite columns (and it has influenced the way I write my own daily online column). Rosenbaum started his column while writing *Explaining Hitler*, his gripping book about the inability of scholars and artists to account for Hitler's evil. Because of the darkness of his subject, Rosenbaum decided his column would be "all praise all the time." That is, he would focus on books, films, music, and other things that struck him as "beautiful, brilliant, redemptive." Since the supply of such matter is always short at any given time, he doesn't confine himself to contemporary subjects; he'll write about Lucretius one week, Shakespeare the next, Rosanne Cash the week after that. Inevitably, over time, Rosenbaum has ended up writing now and then about things he hates; for example, about his distaste for the way the Italian comic actor Roberto Benigni sentimentalized the Holocaust in the film *Life is Beautiful*. But even when he's on the attack, Rosenbaum tends to be good-natured, as opposed to Wolfe, who can get crabby.

The occasion for this praise is *The Secret Parts of Fortune*, an omnibus of Rosenbaum's best magazine pieces (many of which appeared in an earlier collection, *Travels With Dr. Death*) and his *Observer* columns (collected for the first time). The title comes from a sexual pun in *Hamlet* that Rosenbaum interprets more broadly to suggest that the history of any period is often hidden in the seemingly trivial or obscure. Rosenbaum loves secrets: secret meanings in literary texts; secrets about the ultimate loyalties of double agents (his *Harper's* profile of CIA mole-hunter James Angleton isn't included, alas, but a marvelous *New York Times Magazine* piece about Kim Philby's private papers is); secret societies (probably Rosenbaum's best-known magazine article is an *Esquire* piece about Yale's Skull & Bones); and mysteries about murders and suicides, which are always shrouded in secrecy.

Rosenbaum is not, strictly speaking, a *Washington Monthly*-type writer. Although he leans leftward, he doesn't spend much time thinking about how government programs can be improved, or about the dynamics of large organizations, or about aspects of American culture that stiffen class barriers. (Indeed, in one of the book's weaker pieces, he argues, somewhat facetiously, for the superiority of blood 'n' guts tabloid journalism over journalism about powerful institutions.) When he does make political pronouncements, they are often whimsical. I don't think even Rosenbaum expects anyone to take seriously his proposal that New York City subsidize dancers who've aged out of the profession because they "animate our streets and sidewalks with their very walk, at least as worthy of serious municipal protection" as architectural landmarks.

But Rosenbaum does have a powerful moral sensibility. A Rosenbaum subspecialty is challenging snobbish opinions about such subjects as quack cancer cures, Wayne Newton, Los Angeles, Charles Dickens, and Levittown. There's a moral component as well to Rosenbaum's penchant for shining a light on unknown ("secret") belief systems of seemingly respectable people. In "Turn On, Tune In, Drop Dead," Rosenbaum catches up with Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, many years after her pathbreaking writings about coming to terms with death, and discovers she's developed a ghoulish idealized notion that death represents a higher stage of consciousness. In "The Great Ivy League Nude Posture Scandal," he reveals how the nation's most prestigious colleges allowed a scientist with notions about the meaning of body type that veered close to phrenology to photo-


**The Crime Drop in America**
***Alfred Blumstein** and **Joel Wallman**, Editors*




*"It is a pleasure to see sanity and balance brought to a topic that is typically fraught with emotionality and simple-minded, wrongheaded diagnoses and solutions."*
**–Neil Smelser, Director, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences**

*"This is the definitive examination of the crime drop. Every criminologist should read it...before the crime rate starts to go up again."*
**–Jack Levin, Director, The Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict, Northeastern University; co-author, *The Will to Kill: Making Sense of Senseless Murder***

**Contributors:** *Alfred Blumstein, Joel Wallman, Garen Wintemute, William Spelman, Richard Rosenfeld, Bruce Johnson, Andrew Golub, Eloise Dunlap, John Eck, Edward Maguire, Jeffrey Grogger, James Alan Fox*

***Cambridge Studies in Criminology***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0-521-79296-7 | Hardback | $54.95 |
| 0-521-79712-8 | Paperback | $19.95 |

*Available in bookstores or from*

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211
Call toll-free 800-872-7423
Web site: www.cambridge.org
AmEx/MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

graph freshmen in the buff. Rosenbaum is also stirred by the heroism of others, most movingly in the chapter of *Explaining Hitler* about Fritz Gerlich, the heroic Munich journalist whose withering published attacks on Hitler sent him to Dachau (another great Rosenbaum essay not included in the new book, alas).

Though Rosenbaum is not really a *Monthly*-ish writer, he lives by the ideal that reporters should be equally committed to library research and shoe-leather reporting. Rosenbaum is primarily a studier of texts—he immersed himself in the work of the 17th century metaphysical poets when he was at college—but then he views just about *everything*, on the page and off, as text. In the introduction to *The Secret Parts of Fortune*, Rosenbaum writes about learning that "the attentiveness to ambiguity" he developed by reading John Donne could be applied equally well to "trial transcripts, autopsy reports, congressional-hearing records, Mob wiretap pickups, and the like." Even interviews are, for Rosenbaum, mostly an occasion to create a new text: "I'm always amazed to discover, on reading the transcript of an interview over for a third time, how much more emerges in some slip or tic, the shadow of some submerged truth that belies the surface intention of the words." This is a useful antidote to the tendency of many journalists to treat first impressions as gospel.

Did I mention that Rosenbaum's writing is raucously funny? There are even several amusing passages in *Explaining Hitler*. Probably the most laugh-out-loud funny pieces in the new collection are his tenth-anniversary Watergate essay and "Long Island, Babylon" (the latter repeatedly refers to its setting as "the Guyland," but manages, miraculously, never to sneer). The Watergate piece includes an outraged response to H.R. Haldeman's denigration of the "cult of people" who are "Watergate buffs." Rosenbaum replies that this wrongly lumps Watergate obsessives "with 'assassination buffs' and the aura of bad taste and futility that is associated with their efforts … [T]he eyes of Watergate buffs tend to twinkle rather than stare. Ours is a civilized passion." When his curiosity about apparent flaws in the Warren Report nonetheless sends him to Dallas (for *Texas Monthly*) to give conspiracy theorists a hearing, he's amusingly self-aware. He climbs down into a manhole in Dealey Plaza and squints through an opening in the pavement, as he's told to do, but balks when he's told to pull a heavy manhole cover over his head. This is, he writes, "a metaphor for my own stance in relation to the whole web of conspiracy theories … I'll go down into the manhole with them, but I won't pull the cover over my head." In fact, this is also a nice metaphor for Rosenbaum's general approach to journalism. He will give extremists and fringe groups of all kinds the sort of generous hearing they usually can't get anywhere else. He will entertain wild theories of his own. He will faithfully explain where text and reason lead him. But he will never let his or anyone else's imagination do violence to decency or common sense.

TIMOTHY NOAH, *a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly, *writes* Slate's *"Chatterbox" column.*

# From Russia With Loot

**By Andrew Cockburn**

**GODFATHER OF THE KREMLIN: Boris Berezovsky and the Looting of Russia**
*by Paul Klebnikov & Drenka Willen*
Harcourt Brace, $28.00

ONE OF THE MORE ENTERTAINING sporting events of this spring was the great "Worst Western Journalist in Moscow" contest sponsored by *eXile*, the outstanding expatriate-edited Moscow journal. Through succeeding elimination rounds, masters of the cliché, manglers of syntax, virtuosos of plagiarism, and, above all, those who persist in misreporting Russia as a land advancing into the sun-kissed territory of "reform," were awarded by the judges for their superior awfulness with advancement to the final bouts. While the final was a somewhat lackluster and predictable walkover for David Hoffman of *The Washington Post*, the event provided an illuminating survey about why we know so little about what is going on in Russia.

Paul Klebnikov, who (perhaps wisely) does not live in Moscow, did not qualify for the competition, but he would hardly have gotten past the first round. For years, he has been delivering unvarnished reports to the readers of *Forbes* magazine on the reality of life in Russia today. They do not make a pretty picture. Now, with *Godfather of the Kremlin: Boris Berezovsky and the Looting of Russia* Klebnikov has given us an indispensable as well as riveting account of the rise of this cunning, rapacious, and ruthless figure, the most successful (so far) of all the predatory creatures who prowl in the jungle of Russian capitalism.

Berezovsky is an intriguing figure. When the Soviet system crumbled he was halfway through a distinguished career as an academic mathematician. Yet when the new world dawned he sprang into action. The foundation of his fortune lay in an arrangement he forged with the management of Avtovaz, the huge and ramshackle Russian car maker. In exchange for cutting senior management into the action, he was able to get cars straight off the assembly line for far less than the cost of production, which he then sold at immense profit through his newly founded chain of auto dealerships. The factory workers paid the difference by going without pay for months on end.

The early '90s, when Berezovsky was getting under way, was the time of the great gang wars in Moscow, as rival criminal coalitions shot it out for control of key industries and businesses. Businessmen could only ward off extortion or worse by paying one or other criminal group for a "roof"—protection. On one side in the most important war stood the Chechens, much feared for their ruthlessness, and impenetrable to outsiders. On the other were the "Slavic alliance," native Russian gangsters determined to fight off the Chechen threat. It appears that Berezovsky forged an alliance with the Chechen forces, who provided his roof, a connection that would have terrible consequences in years to come. In the meantime, his fearsome allies took him through some tough times, such as the bloody gun battle on Lenin Prospekt outside one of his showrooms in 1993, or, more seriously, the detonation of a large bomb beside his passing car, which killed his bodyguard, decapitated his driver, and left him badly wounded.


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

By 1994, Berezovsky had moved beyond dependence on mobster protection. He had forged a more potent alliance by paying for the publication of Boris Yeltsin's memoirs, thus gaining entree to the inner circle around the grateful author/president. This court was populated with strange figures, such as the "hippie journalist" Valentin Yumashev, through whom Berezovsky obtained his entree; Yeltsin's tennis coach, who ran a large criminal empire of his own from a Kremlin office; not to mention Alexander Korzhakov, for a while the powerful chief of Yeltsin's Praetorian guard who later reported that Berezovsky had asked him to kill a business rival. Korzhakov performed great services to history by his assiduous bugging of everyone's phones, leaking the tapes when it seemed useful, and by his forthcoming reminiscences once he had fallen from his master's graces.

Once inside "the family," Berezovsky masterfully parlayed political connections into cash. Key to his modus operandi was the realization (shared by many of his peers in the rising business oligarchy) that it was not necessary to control a business, simply its cash flow. In a remarkably candid 1996 interview with Klebnikov he termed this approach the "privatization of profit." A fascinating chapter lays out in detail, complete with the transcripts of bugged phone calls, how this method was successfully applied to the looting of Aeroflot, the formerly profitable state airline. Thanks in part to the appointment of Yeltsin's son-in-law as the company's head, Berezovsky was able to siphon off huge chunks of Aeroflot's considerable hard currency earnings through a series of shell companies in Switzerland.

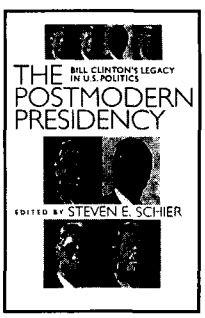
From aviation, Berezovsky moved on to the really big money in Russia—oil. His entry into the oil business was facilitated by the most egregious of all the great ripoffs that have charactarized post-Soviet Russia, the "loans for shares" scheme by which our hero and his fellow oligarchs helped themselves to priceless chunks of the country's resources, for pennies on the dollar, in return for financing Yeltsin's re-election in 1996. Following that free, but hardly fair, election, the godfathers increased his political profile, taking various high-level government posts (without of course ceasing his business operations for a second). It was at this time that his interest in Chechen matters re-emerged, in the form of lavish ransom payments to kidnappers in Chechnya for the retrieval of their victims. Klebnikov points out that this flow of money to the gangs in the devastated territory effectively made it impossible for the elected Chechen leader to stabilize his country. The consequent anarchy, culminating in the invasion of Dagestan in the summer of 1999 by fundamentalist Islamist Chechens, provided the backdrop for the second Chechen war and the rise to power of Vladimir Putin. Klebnikov suspends judgment as to whether any of the leadership in Moscow had a hand in the terrorist bombings in the capital that provided the final pretext for the invasion of Chechnya last year, although George Soros has been less demure, heavily hinting in an article in the *New York Review of Books* that Berezovsky deliberately fomented the war in furtherance of his political intrigues.

The net result of the business practices exemplified by Klebnikov's subject has been a devastated country: its resources looted, its people (apart from a favored few) condemned to misery and despair, and lives that are becoming inexorably shorter as the population dies off. None of this appears to matter to Bere-


**How will you remember Bill Clinton?**

**The Postmodern Presidency**

**Bill Clinton's Legacy in U.S. Politics**
Edited by Steven E. Schier




"A convincing argument that Americans will be reckoning with Clinton long after the Clinton presidency has ended. In his relationships with Congress, in altering the contours of partisan politics, and in changing the substance of what Americans discuss in domestic and foreign policy, this book provides us with several pictures of the altered political landscape. A must read."—John Kenneth White, Catholic University of America

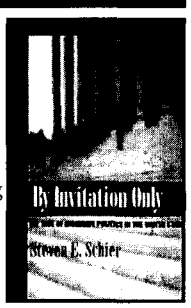
"Helps unravel and put into perspective the complex, contradictory, and paradoxical impact of the Clinton years."—Michael A. Genovese, Loyola Marymount University

Available Election Day, 2000
***Cloth $45.00/Paper $19.95***

**Where will you be November 7th?**

**By Invitation Only**

**The Rise of Exclusive Politics in the United States**
Steven E. Schier




"[This] book does more than anything I've read in a long time to explain the dysfunctions of modern American politics."—Jonathan Rauch, *National Journal*

***Cloth $45.00 / Paper $17.95***

**University of Pittsburgh Press**

**Available from your favorite bookseller**
**tel: 607-277-2211 • fax: 607-277-6292**
Visit our Web site at www.pitt.edu/~press




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

zovsky and others like him. Given the relative quiescence of the U.S. and other western administrations—so long as each disaster can be labeled a move toward "reform"—toward this depressing turn of events, no one here seems to care very much either. This book at least helps demolish any claim of ignorance.

ANDREW COCKBURN'S *most recent book is* Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Sadam Hussein.

# Peace Not Perfection

**By John Marks**

FEW SIGHTS IN PARIS ARE BETTER than standing on the Champs Elysées at night and looking at the Arc de Triomphe. Commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 after his great triumph at Austerlitz, the Arc is a monument to all his victories.

Like most visitors to France, I have been struck by the aesthetics of the monument, not by the record of the man. Yet recently, on reading Gary Jonathan Bass' informative new book, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crime Tribunals*, I realized that during the early 19th century most of Europe—outside of France—regarded Napoleon as the Slobodan Milosevic of his day.

Napoleon's armies, after all, pillaged much of the continent, overthrew legal governments, and set up puppet regimes. As with Milosevic, there was fierce debate over how best to punish Napoleon. The Prussians, furious that his troops had executed their prisoners—a war crime then and now—were most extreme. Prussian field marshal von Blücher declared that Napoleon should be summarily shot. "But Britain would have none of this," writes Bass, "because of an idiosyncratic intrusion of its domestic traditions into its foreign policy—in this case, the gallant or priggish refusal of Wellington to have anything to do with so sordid a deed."

The British position prevailed. After Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo, British marines arrested him, and he was banished without trial to spend the rest of his life on the island of St. Helena in the frigid South Atlantic.

In the 185 years that have passed since Napoleon's banishment, the international community has developed an array of legal mechanisms to deal with people who wage war in ways that violate international law. While great progress has been made, the world is far from the point where justice is applied uniformly. Dealing with Milosevic, as with Napoleon, the administration of justice largely depends on the political needs of the victors.

**STAY THE HAND OF VENGEANCE: The Politics of War Crime Tribunals**
*by Gary Jonathan Bass*
Princeton University Press, $29.95

In today's world, there is a full spectrum of responses to war crimes. At one end is the punishment the Prussians wanted for Napoleon—summary execution. At the other end of the spectrum, war criminals escape scot-free—Saddam Hussein is a prime example. In between, there are many shades of gray.

Bass, a journalist and professor of international politics at Princeton, focuses his book on the factors that determine whether war criminals are held legally accountable—"why some countries will sometimes be strikingly idealistic in the face of foreign wickedness, and at other times will cynically abandon the pursuit of justice." He lists a series of variables that determine the approach likely to be followed.

The first of these is the legalism of liberal states. Illiberal states, such as the former USSR, are not usually concerned with legal niceties. They favor executions, sometimes preceded by show trials. During World War II, Stalin told Churchill and Roosevelt at Tehran that 50,000 Nazis should be shot when captured. The scale of Stalin's proposal, not the principle, horrified Churchill who believed that only a "short list" of Hitler's close collaborators should be executed on the spot. Roosevelt initially agreed with Churchill, and for a brief time summary execution of top Nazis was the joint British-American position. However, U.S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson took what Bass calls the legalist view—meaning that due process should be applied and that basic fairness required that even the worst of the Nazis should be tried before military tribunals. His view won out and the result was the war crimes tribunal at Nuremberg. As Bass writes, the Nazis were "accorded the benefit of legal procedure as it had evolved in America, because of an American belief in the rightness of its own domestic legalism."

The second factor that determines the application of justice relates to the protection of soldiers. Bass points out that when states are not pursuing unconditional surrender, as the Allies were in World War II, they are reluctant to put their own soldiers at risk in order to arrest war criminals. For example, NATO forces in Bosnia, led by the U.S., have tried to avoid casualties, at virtually any cost. While they have arrested some lesser suspects, they have not seized either Radovan Karadzic or Ratko Mladic, top Bosnian Serb leaders who were indicted for war crimes by the international tribunal at the Hague.

Third, Bass notes that states are usually most intent on prosecuting war criminals who commit illegal acts against their own citizens. Thus, he notes that the British government has shown considerably more interest in bringing to justice the Libyans who allegedly blew up Pan Am 101 above Lockerbie, Scotland than it has been in punishing Serbs for atrocities against Bosnian civilians. "Selfishness predominates, but not totally," he says. At the same time, international rhetoric—if not action—is definitely rising against national selfishness and against the tendency to take more seriously crimes against people of one's own race than those against others (compare the Western response to human rights abuses in Kosovo to that in Rwanda or East Timor).

Anger is the fourth factor. During World War II, Britains and Americans shared very strong feelings—including large doses of racism and national hatred—against Germans and Japanese. If, as Bass points out, for some reason Churchill and Roosevelt had not wanted to take action against top Nazis at the end of the war, they would have had angry publics to contend with. A dictator like Stalin can much more easily ignore popular outrage, although even the most entrenched leader takes political risks by doing so. "Today," Bass writes, "Madeleine Albright's push for a tougher war crimes policy may manage to win out, but it always risks being swamped in bureaucratic infighting or

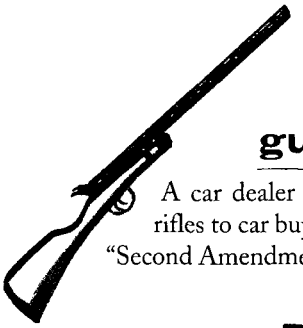


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Tidbits & Outrages

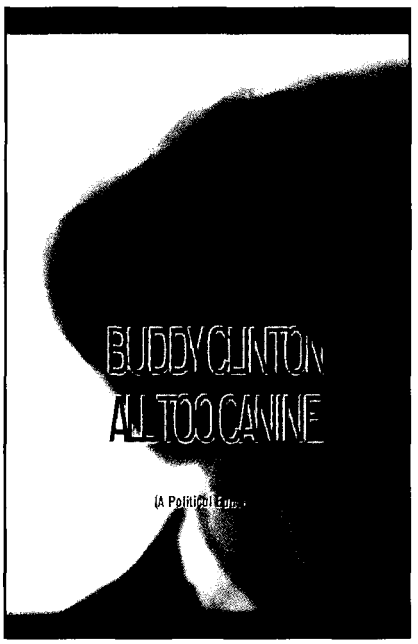
## At least they won't be watching so much TV.

*An MIT professor is developing software that enables pets to surf the Net.*



## Satisfaction had *better* be guaranteed.

A car dealer in Tennessee offered free rifles to car buyers during his first annual "Second Amendment Saturday."

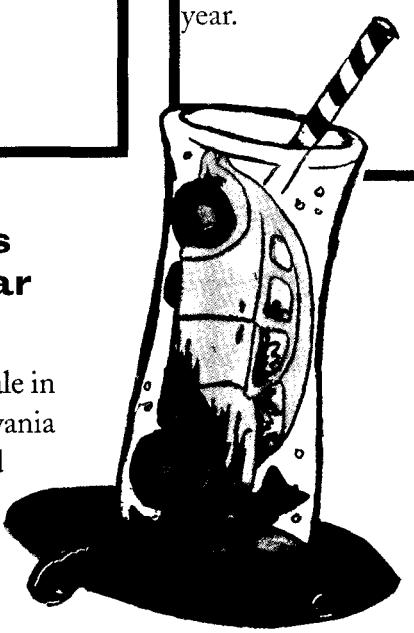



## He's getting campaign advice from Buddy.

*A 15-year-old dog is both a registered voter and a mayoral candidate in Kings Mountain, N.C.*

## The waiters dress as lawyers.

A Baltimore businessman is hoping to open Crash Café, a theme restaurant that celebrates wrecks and smashups later this year.



## If you're going to surf, always use a modem.

*A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that people who go online in search of sex partners are more likely to have sexually transmitted diseases than those who don't.*

## Pencil Sharpeners Were Regular Price.

The back-to-school sale in an East York, Pennsylvania Wal-Mart included discounts on shotgun shells.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

overruled—by the Pentagon, Bill Clinton, or an American electorate with no stomach for casualties. The best guarantee of an idealistic policy is consistent idealistic pressure from the electorate."

Lastly, there is the growing importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). During World War II, Churchill and Roosevelt did not have to contend with Human Rights Watch accusing them of moral deficiency because they were putting military considerations in front of saving concentration camp inmates. If today's human rights consciousness had existed during World War II—and it is unfortunate that it did not—intelligence reports of Nazi atrocities would have leaked out, and Allied leaders would have been forced to divert resources to attack the death camps.

At the same time, Bass makes clear that, as much as the human-rights movement wishes it were otherwise, the prosecution of war criminals is not an absolute carried out in accordance with universal standards. However, he does not deal with the question of whether existing standards should be compromised or negotiated away in order to produce settlements that can save hundreds of thousands of lives or improve the observance of human rights in a particular country.

As someone who works in the field of conflict resolution, I favor negotiated settlements. In today's world it is extremely unlikely that the United States and other countries would be willing to wage war to the point of unconditional surrender. Therefore, it is virtually impossible to force from power human rights abusers—like Milosevic, Pinochet, and Saddam Hussein. The only way such people ever agree to step down is through a negotiated agreement that includes amnesty for their crimes. Such an agreement was, in fact, the means by which Pinochet gave up control. He made what was considered a binding agreement, within the Chilean legal framework. That agreement was later, in effect, ignored by a Spanish magistrate and the British courts, citing international human rights standards.

I question whether the application of such standards should be superior to all other considerations. There are times when the only way to get a human rights abuser out of power or to save lives is to negotiate deals with people who have committed atrocities. If such deals are not considered binding by the international community and can be overruled by a judge in a faraway country, it will become virtually impossible to bring an end to many conflicts. If the Pinochet precedent were extended, could not the carefully negotiated South African agreements that brought an end to apartheid and set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission be negated by a foreign court? Or, what choice would a Milosevic have but to stay in power, if he knows that any arrangement by which he might agree to step down will have no force.

I do not dispute that Milosevic has been guilty of crimes against humanity. I only ask: Would not the greater good be served by negotiating him out of power and, as part of the bargain, guaranteeing him a safe haven?

JOHN MARKS *is founder and president of Search for Common Ground in Washington and the European Centre for Common Ground in Brussels.*

# Of Moose And Men

**By Daniel Akst**

RALPH KRAMDEN AND ED Norton were a couple of working stiffs from Brooklyn. They labored all day to drive a bus up and down Madison Avenue and kept the city's sewers flowing, but they were also something much more exalted—something mysterious, grand, and, at some level, even sacred. Yes, they were Raccoons, and as members of this great fraternal organization they got to wear those Austro-Hungarian naval uniforms with the fringed epaulets and Davy Crockett caps. Remember the tail-wagging Raccoon handshake? The yodel-like greeting?

That Jackie Gleason and Art Carney played characters in a lodge tells us something about how long fraternal organizations have been the butt of jokes in this country. In *From Mutual Aid to the Welfare State: Fraternal Societies and Social Services, 1890-1967*, David T. Beito, an historian at the University of Alabama, shows that some people were joking about lodges even before the '50s, when "The Honeymooners" was made. But their members took these fraternal organizations much more seriously, and by the time Beito is finished we know why: because in an era when there was little if any social safety net, the lodge provided the only insurance many members could afford or obtain.

In his fascinating but strangely affectless new book, Beito tells the remarkable story of fraternal organizations—all those Masons, Moose, Oddfellows, Woodmen, and so forth—as mutual benefit societies that enabled vast numbers of Americans to safeguard their families without the stigma of charity or the snare of long-term dependence. "A conservative estimate," Beito writes with stunning matter-of-factness, "would be that one-third of all adult males over age 19 were members in 1910."

The scope and breadth of these organizations and the benefits they provided is startling. "By 1895 half the value of all life insurance policies in force was on the fraternal plan," Beito writes, adding that by 1908 "the 200 leading societies had paid well over $1 billion in death benefits." But all was not smooth sailing, and Beito shows how the problems these organizations encountered foreshadow the difficulties governments, employers, and health maintenance organizations would struggle with later when trying to accomplish the same social welfare ends.

Organized medicine, for instance, mustered furious opposition to the system of "lodge medicine," whereby lodges hired physicians on a capitation basis. Almost all the lodges that provided health insurance (or in some cases even ran hospitals) found themselves sorely tested by rapidly rising costs. The death benefits offered by many lodges, meanwhile, were financed on the same pay-as-you-go basis as Social Security, rather than on some reserve system, and until circumstances forced a change, many were actuarially unsound.

On the other hand, the lodges had the advantage of a powerful sense of mutuality reinforced by self-selection and local governance. Lodge benefits were insurance that members themselves had paid for with their dues, rather than the handouts that, in those days, appeared to carry a strong sense of


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shame among these hardworking fraternalists. These benefits were self-limiting; fraternal organizations raised funds from their members, most of whom were directly involved at the local level through their lodges. And effective anti-fraud techniques were built in. Beito shows that visits by lodge members to an ailing brother or sister not only brought welcome support but served to confirm whether the aid recipient really was sick or injured.

**FROM MUTUAL AID TO THE WELFARE STATE**
**Fraternal Societies and Social Service, 1890-1967**
*by David T. Beito*
University of North Carolina Press, $55.00

Contrary to the image of these organizations as havens for sweating Babbitry, Beito shows that fraternal organizations were especially popular with people near the bottom of the social scale, who were most in need of the cushion and connections a lodge could provide. Immigrants were hugely active, and just as blacks had their own baseball leagues in the era of segregation, they also had their own fraternal organizations, some of them parallel versions of white groups. (Racism was as common in lodges as the rest of society; the Improved Order of Redmen, for instance, whose rituals purported to celebrate American Indians, barred any from joining). Women too had groups of their own and auxiliaries to the men's groups.

Almost without exception, fraternal organizations strove to enforce what in later years would derisively come to be known (mainly by those who grew up in the security of them) as "middle-class values." Virtues like honesty and thrift are desirable for their own sake, of course, but become crucial in a mutual benefit society like a fraternal organization, which depends on member restraint in not abusing the commons.

The decline of American fraternalism has had many causes, as Beito makes clear. Among the biggest, he argues, was the rise of the public welfare state, which usurped the key attraction organizations had for working people. Other reasons include rising affluence, which helped foster a shift from mutual benefit fraternities to "service" organizations of businessmen—such as Rotary International—who did things for others. On top of everything else, Americans just stopped joining things, as amply demonstrated by Robert D. Putnam's recent book, *Bowling Alone*.

What Beito misses in this otherwise admirable work is the flesh and blood nature of human fellowship, and the way a lodge could lift up people otherwise consigned to lives of drudgery. My own father, for instance, himself a working stiff from Brooklyn, was a proud Knight of Pythias for many years. He always said it was for the burial insurance, but now I see how much more there was to it. He was a bank teller, yet as a Knight he rose to the exalted status of chancellor one year (everybody got a turn to head the lodge), and was called upon to lead, write, and speak publicly. There was organizing, politicking, and charity work, but most of all there was a place where he was somebody.

But Beito has captured one of the most important ways lodges did lift peo-


# The New World of Welfare:
## Shaping a Post-TANF Agenda for Policy

A conference hosted by the University of Michigan
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, co-sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation
and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

**February 1-2, 2001**
**J. W. Marriott Hotel**
**Washington, DC**

**Organizers: Rebecca Blank and Ron Haskins.** Selected participants: Gordon Berlin, Mark Greenberg, Wade Horn, Charles Murray, Wendell Primus, Jason Turner

For more information, call 734-764-3490, visit the Ford School web site at http://www.fordschool.umich.edu, or email us at conf-info@umich.edu

**Deadline for registration: December 15, 2000**


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ple up, which was to give them a shield against destitution and dependency—a shield of their own making and control. Nowadays, of course, governments and employers provide at least some of the security and sense of identity that people used to get from belonging to a fraternal organization. Probably this is both inevitable and good, but it's also sad that the change has made it easier to just stay home and watch TV.

DANIEL AKST *is a freelance writer and author of* St. Burl's Obituary.

# The Secret Sharer

**By Walter Pincus**

READING THROUGH *NATIONAL Insecurity: U.S. Intelligence After the Cold War* I was brought back to a seminar I tried to teach at Yale more than two decades ago to students who insisted that I could either teach them how to argue for the end of the CIA or nothing.

The Center for International Policy, which sponsored this volume, was initiated in the midst of those post-Watergate CIA exposures. It was, as Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), one of the co-founders of the Center, explains in his foreword to the book, a time when "our nation's support for dictators and our questionable tactics abroad had earned us a dubious reputation around the world as hostile to human rights." And Harkin sets out what must have been the starting point for each of the essayists: "Intelligence is still required (in the post-Cold War world), but it should be refocused. Its tactics should be circumscribed by the need to build a safer world, based on law and cooperation. Its operations should be less secret and more integrated with the needs of an open and dynamic foreign policy. It is time to forge a new path."

Few would argue with Harkin's words if he were talking about diplomacy and the State Department. But intelligence activities in the real world cannot be based on "law and cooperation." And as far as I can tell, being "less secret" means not being secret at all, particularly if it is tied to "the needs of an open and dynamic foreign policy."

There are a great many historic CIA failures in this book that are worth bringing together and which my 1976 Yale students could have used to write one hell of a manifesto. The first essayist, Roger Hilsman, who last served in government in the 1960s at the State Department during the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis, writes: "Covert political action is not only something the United States can do without after the Cold War, it's something the United States could have done without during the Cold War." In a swift *tour d'horizon* of the Cold War intelligence effort, Hilsman summons up failed assassination attempts, the Bay of Pigs, and covert actions in Iran, Nicaragua, and elsewhere. That leads him to call the record of U.S. intelligence "mixed," giving more credit to satellite intercepts and imagery coverage, much as he found U-2 photos more important in the Cuban crisis than human intelligence. For Hilsman, the time has come to shut down "all the CIA stations in American embassies abroad, except for those engaged in liaison with allies." He regards satellite imagery, monitoring foreign broadcasts, and code-breaking as the basic intelligence activities that should remain. Hilsman also recognizes that there are still threats to the United States for which intelligence is required, but he never explains how the few tools he offers can meet these new, smaller, but still venal, enemies.

**NATIONAL INSECURITY: U.S. Intelligence After the Cold War**
*by Craig Eisendrath*
Temple University Press, $34.50

In a more current and thoughtful vein, Melvin M. Goodman, who left a senior analytical position at the CIA in the Reagan years and has continued to follow intelligence as Chairman of the International Relations Department at the National War College, gets in his requisite licks on a wide variety of agency foul-ups—from politicizing analysis to creating paramilitary groups that now oppose us. Goodman suggests some restructuring along the lines of the British intelligence system, a route worth pursuing. There, the espionage and clandestine collection take place under MI6 and report to the top of the British Foreign Office. Research and analysis, on the other hand, are conducted by an independent organization that is totally separate from both the Foreign Office and the military.

Richard A. Stubbing, who handled funding of the intelligence community at the Office of Management and Budget for 20 years, reminds us that far more intelligence money goes to Pentagon-run agencies than to the CIA, and he suggests major cuts in that part of the Pentagon's budget. Significantly, he also calls for "greater emphasis on non-military reporting" and for a $200 million increase in the State Department's diplomatic service budget. "The Foreign Service is not officially part of the intelligence budget," he notes, "but it should be a prime source for satisfying the higher priority assigned to political and economic reporting." It has been a long time since anyone has had the nerve to say that.

Several of the authors focus on congressional oversight, making it stronger or even making it an active partner in developing clandestine programs. That view fails to take into consideration the ever-changing political nature of Congress. If you think the politicization of intelligence analysis by agencies is bad, what kind of intelligence activities can you expect from highly partisan politicians?

When Rep. Dan Glickman (D-Kan.) chaired the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the panel carefully and quietly pursued its oversight function. When Rep. Larry Combest (R-Texas) took over, the committee began taking a pro-activist position on the increasingly expensive satellite collection program. Now, Rep. Porter Goss (R-Fla.), the first former CIA case officer to hold the chairmanship in either the House or Senate, has turned oversight into a more sophisticated operation, but with less publicity. Goss' additional positions within the House leadership, as a member of the Rules Committee and a deputy whip, give him an authority in that body that no previous chairman has ever had.

Over on the Senate side, the ups and downs have been more public. While chairman, Sen. Dennis DiConcini (D-Ariz.) got into a feud with R. James Woolsey, President Clinton's first CIA director and the disagreements over budget between the two eventually played a role in Woolsey's early departure. More recently, the current chairman of the Sen-


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# MAKE 2 FREE CUSTOM JAZZ CDs

**Start with the music shown here and for thousands more jazz and classical selections visit us at**

**www.musicmaker.com/freecds**

## ROMANTIC GUITAR
**Earl Klugh** I'll See You Again 1208
**John Scofield & Pat Metheny** Quiet Rising 1209
**Stanley Jordan** The Lady In My Life 1385
**Dwight Sills** Desert Skies 1212
**Al Di Meola** July 1210
**Jim Hall** In A Sentimental Mood 1386
**Wes Montgomery** Lois Ann 1382

## FREE JAZZ AND THE AVANT-GARDE
**Ornette Coleman** The Riddle 1318
**Cecil Taylor** Steps 1325
**Dewey Redman** O'Besso 1326
**Eric Dolphy** Out To Lunch 1320
**Sun Ra** Stardust For Tomorrow 1321
**Archie Shepp** Sonny's Back 1322
**Lester Bowie** Rope-A-Dope 1323
**Paul Bley** Contrary 1324
**Ornette Coleman** Morning Song* 1292

## JAZZ FOR A LAZY AFTERNOON
**Dave Grusin** Maria 1220
**Eliane Elias** An Up Dawn 1383
**Chick Corea** Samba Yantra 1222
**Miles Davis** Yesterdays 1223
**Herbie Hancock** Watermelon Man 1225
**Everette Harp** Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology) 1226
**Diana Krall** As Long As I Live 1227
**Joe Henderson** Lazy Afternoon 1228

## THE JAZZ TITANS
**Miles Davis** Move 1173
**Sonny Rollins** Tune Up 1174
**Thelonious Monk** Straight No Chaser 1175
**John Coltrane** Blue Train 1176
**Charlie Parker & Dizzy Gillespie** A Night In Tunisia* 1177
**Duke Ellington** It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing) 1178
**Coleman Hawkins** Someone To Watch Over Me 1179
**Herbie Hancock** Canteloupe Island 1180
**Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley** Mercy, Mercy, Mercy 1181

## VIVA DIVAS!
**Diana Krall** Jimmie 1185
**Diana Krall** Frim Fram Sauce 1186
**Billie Holiday** Them There Eyes 1187
**Ella Fitzgerald** Try A Little Tenderness, I Got It Bad... (medley) 1188
**Sarah Vaughan** Time After Time 1390
**Dinah Washington** Romance In The Dark 1190
**Lena Horne** Mood Indigo* 1191
**Nancy Wilson** On Green Dolphin Street 1192
**Betty Carter** My Favorite Things 1193
**Cassandra Wilson** Strange Fruit 1376
**Carmen McRae** Dindi 1391

## ON THE COOL SIDE
**Miles Davis** Jeru 1327
**Gerry Mulligan with Chet Baker** My Funny Valentine 1328
**Cal Tjader** Mambo Sangria 1329
**Lennie Tristano** Wow 1330
**Lee Konitz/Brad Mehldau/ Charlie Haden** The Song Is You 1331
**Jimmy Giuffre** Iranic 1332
**June Christy** Day-Dream 1333
**Stan Getz** Pennies From Heaven* 1387
**Jim Hall** Chelsea Bridge* 1335

## LOUIS ARMSTRONG CENTENNIAL
Basin Street Blues 1245
Mahogany Hall Stomp 1392
Just Squeeze Me (But Please Don't Tease Me) 1393
C'est Si Bon 1394
A Kiss To Build A Dream On* 1395
Honeysuckle Rose 1247
Jeepers Creepers 1250
I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You 1248
I've Got The World On A String 1249
Lazy River 1252

## THE ART OF THE BALLAD
**Billie Holiday** Lover Man 1377
**Grant Green** Idle Moments 1257
**Lee Morgan** Ceora 1259
**Benny Green** Summer Nights 1295
**Ranee Lee** Summer Knows 1296
**Art Farmer** Like Someone In Love 1261
**Eric Dolphy** Something Sweet Something Tender 1262
**Lee Konitz/Charlie Haden/ Brad Mehldau** Body and Soul 1263
**Nancy Wilson** Lush Life 1294

## TOP BRASS
**Lee Morgan** The Rumproller 1267
**Donald Byrd** Fuego 1268
**Kenny Dorham** El Matador 1269
**Freddie Hubbard** Hubtones 1270
**Miles Davis** Woody'n You 1271
**Miles Davis** Donna 1272
**Clifford Brown** Cookin' 1273
**Dizzy Gillespie** Oop Bop Sh'Bam 1396
**Art Farmer** Mox Nix 1275
**Chet Baker** Imagination 1290
**Art Farmer** Blue Bossa* 1291

## SMOOTH GROOVES
**Pieces of a Dream** Mt. Airy Groove 1276
**Dave Grusin** Tonight 1277
**Najee** Sweet Love 1278
**Dwight Sills** Dreamin' 1279
**Medeski, Martin & Wood** Nocturne 1280
**John Scofield** I'll Take Les 1281
**Fattburger** Imagine That 1282
**Bobbi Humphrey** Harlem River Drive 1283
**Brian Hughes** Dusk 1289
**George Howard** Poet 1284
**Ronnie Laws** Solid Ground 1384

## THE BOP ERA
**Fats Navarro** Lady Bird 1303
**Dizzy Gillespie & Charlie Parker** Groovin' High 1299
**Dexter Gordon** Love For Sale 1300
**Thelonious Monk** Round Midnight 1301
**Charlie Parker** Ornithology 1302
**Bud Powell Trio** Bouncing With Bud 1304
**Sonny Stitt** I Got Rhythm 1306
**John Coltrane** Moment's Notice 1298

## SWINGTIME!
**Duke Ellington** Take The 'A' Train 1308
**Benny Goodman** Jersey Bounce 1309
**Count Basie** One O'Clock Jump 1311
**Buddy Rich** I Cover The Waterfront 1312
**Harry James** I've Heard That Song Before 1313
**Stan Kenton** It's Alright With Me 1314
**Glenn Miller** In The Mood 1315
**Artie Shaw** What Is This Thing Called Love 1316

## LATE NIGHT SLOW AND EASY
**Dexter Gordon** Don't Explain 1198
**Chet Baker** Stella By Starlight 1196
**Carmen McRae** The Man I Love 1379
**Johnny Hartman** Summertime 1378
**Milt Jackson** I Should Care 1200
**Earl Klugh** Catherine 1380
**Dave Koz** Cara's Theme 1381
**Everette Harp** Norwegian Lilies 1203
**Janis Siegel** (Love Is) The Tender Trap 1204

## SUMMER SAXOPHONE
**Charlie Parker** Now's The Time* 1232
**John Coltrane** Like Someone In Love 1233
**George Howard** Family Affair 1234
**Sonny Rollins** Sonnymoon For Two* 1235
**Najee** Najee's Theme 1236
**Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley** Country Preacher 1238
**Stan Getz** Don't Worry About Me 1239
**Joe Lovano** I've Got You Under My Skin 1240
**David Sanborn & George Duke** Wives And Lovers* 1241
**Dave Liebman Group** New Vista 1242

*live recording

music maker.com

## Order your FREE custom CDs today!

1 Choose the songs that you like

2 Sequence the songs and personalize each disc with a title you create

3 Return the coupon and receive your first 2 custom CDs FREE (even get a bonus CD at half price: $4.95)

Select from thousands of original recordings on such prestigious labels as Blue Note, Riverside, Pacific Jazz and more. There's no obligation to buy more. Our regular price is $9.95 for the first 5 songs, plus $1.00 for each additional song (there is a charge of 20¢ a minute for any song over 5 minutes).

Visit us online to download FREE songs

**www.MUSICMAKER.COM/freecds**

**MAIL TO: MUSICMAKER.COM, P.O. BOX 8610, RESTON, VA 20191, OR GO TO WWW.MUSICMAKER.COM/FREECDS**

Choose 5 songs per CD, plus add a personalized message/title (UP TO 30 CHARACTERS INCLUDING SPACES):

**FREE CD #1** 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
TITLE

**FREE CD #2** 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
TITLE

***YES! I WANT A BONUS CD AT HALF PRICE ($4.95) WITH THE FOLLOWING SONGS:***
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
TITLE

**I LIKE JAZZ, BUT I ALSO LISTEN TO:**
☐ CLASSICAL ☐ BROADWAY
☐ NEW AGE ☐ LATIN
☐ POP ☐ NOSTALGIA
☐ WORLD ☐ CLASSIC ROCK

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED: If you are not satisfied for any reason, return CD within 30 days for prompt replacement or refund.

PAYMENT METHOD: ☐ BILL ME CHARGE IT TO MY CREDIT CARD: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ DISCOVER ☐ AMEX

ACCOUNT NO. EXP. DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

TELEPHONE ( ) E-MAIL

music maker.com

We reserve the right to ask for additional information or to reject any order. Offer limited to new customers only. A shipping and handling fee on each CD and applicable state and local taxes, if any, will be added.

09-TWM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ate Select Committee on Intelligence, Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), has been a sharp thorn in the side of the agency. Shelby, who was once accused by his then vice chairman, Sen. Bob Kerrey (D-Neb.), of politicizing the panel, held extended hearings into the choice of Anthony Lake that led to Lake's withdrawal as nominee for director. More recently, his investigation into the handling of former CIA Director John M. Deutch's misuse of his home computer has played a role in the Justice Department's re-examination of that case.

U.S. intelligence agencies have traditionally been moving targets, not just for the press and the public, but for Congress and the White House. They have proved both valuable and dangerous, calling up the old adage that you can't live with them and you can't live without them. *National Insecurity* is only the latest in a long line of volumes that make you think about the good and the bad all over again.

WALTER PINCUS *is a national security reporter at* The Washington Post.

# Adam's Eden

**By Alexandra Starr**

PARIS HAS HELD A MAGNETIC PULL over Americans; personalities ranging from Henry James to Molly Ringwald have decamped to the City of Lights and made it their home. Following in that tradition, *New Yorker* writer Adam Gopnik spent five years on the other side of the Atlantic, holding forth on subjects ranging from the idiosyncrasies of French gyms to the bedtime stories he told his son. Now he has published most of his Parisian-centric essays and a handful of diary entries in a collection entitled *From Paris to the Moon*. While the writing occasionally tends towards the sentimental and slightly-too-personal, the book nevertheless provides ample ammunition for the argument that Gopnik is one of the finest belleettrists working today.

Take his disquisition on the World Cup. Gopnik set himself the task of watching a month's worth of soccer games, in an effort to ascertain why it is that the rest of the world loves a sport that many Americans will only watch at gunpoint. At first he is a reluctant spectator. "Things start off briskly," Gopnik observes of the tournaments, "and then fritter away into desultory shin kicking, like a *Wall Street Journal* editorial." Near the end of his self-imposed viewing marathon, however, Gopnik has a Road-to-Damascus revelation—soccer isn't meant to be a spectacle, or a temporary escape from life. Rather it is life, with all of its injustice and tedium. "We seek unfair advantage, celebrate tiny moments of pleasure as though they were final victories, score goals for the wrong side," he writes. "The World Cup is a festival of fate: man accepting his hard circumstances, the near certainty of his failure."

**FROM PARIS TO THE MOON**
*by Adam Gopnik*
Random House, $24.95

The soccer essay is vintage Gopnik, but perhaps the most accomplished piece in this collection is his investigation of the Maurice Papon trial. As a functionary in the Vichy regime, Papon was responsible for the deportation of thousands of French Jews to Auschwitz; half a century later he was tried for his complicity in their deaths. First Gopnik fixes his eye on his fellow journalists, who have come from around the world to cover the event. He readily picks out his American colleagues from the mob. "[R]umpled and exhausted before the day begins, [they] seem to be still longing for Vietnam," he observes. "Even walking up and down the steps of the *palais*, they looked as though they were ducking into the backwash of a helicopter rotor, weighed down by invisible dog tags."

Just the way he sizes up the stakeout crew, Gopnik delivers an uncannily insightful take on the events in the Bordeaux courtroom. It wasn't really the aging Papon who was on trial, he argues, rather, it was the entire French state itself, and its worship of the civil service culture. Extrapolating the metaphor further, he compares France's romance with *l'état* to Americans' infatuation with the Constitution. Our obsession with our founding document "make[s] every personal question a legal question," Gopnik posits, "so that every pat on every bottom, every swig on a bottle, and every pull on every cigarette seem likely to have, eventually, a law and a prosecutor of their own." Passages like that make you wish Gopnik would devote more of his writing to substantive issues.

But Gopnik's focus, particularly in this collection, is on the picayune of daily life. Sometimes his descriptions of quotidian are poignant and illuminating—there are beautiful passages about watching children play in the Luxembourg Gardens, shopping for supper at dusk, becoming a father for the second time. At times, however, Gopnik's language veers towards the maudlin. His description of how he decided on the title for his book—"I see the moon these days from Paris because I once saw Paris from the moon"—is fairly cringe-inducing. Gopnik is also not above a little snobbery. In his lengthy jeremiad on the downfall of the brasserie Balzar, he mentions he will no longer patronize the place—although he will send visiting Americans there. And when he explains how Café Flore, rather than Les Deux Magots, became the hyper-chic locale of the moment, he unnecessarily slips in that he has not only been seated at the Café Flore, but gained access to its most exclusive room.

Still, these are relatively minor flaws in what is ultimately an excellent collection. Like all of the top-flight essayists, the real subjects of Gopnik's essays aren't the parks or cafés or soccer tournaments. Rather, he's trying to wrestle down the mysteries of life.

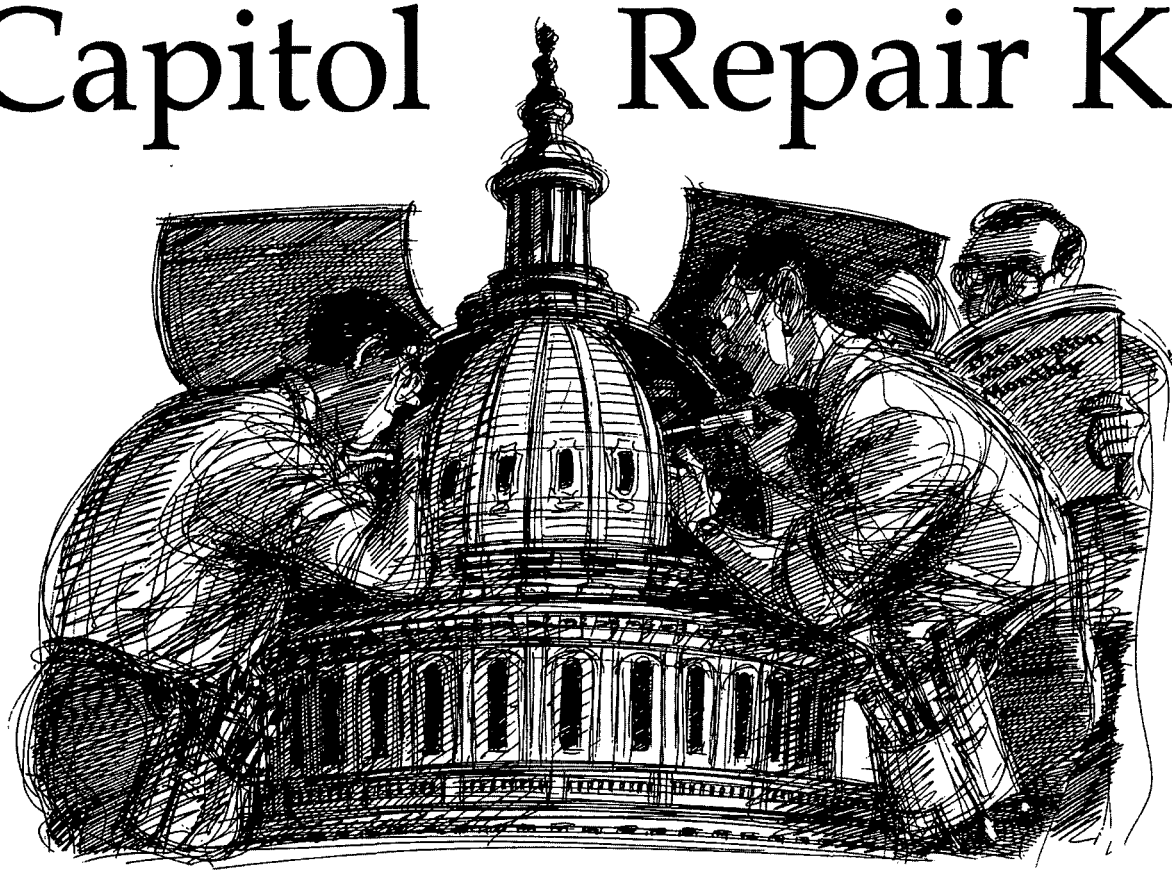
Gopnik knows that only an unexpectant, almost serene mind can fully enjoy life's pleasures. In a passage with a strong whiff of the autobiographical, he argues that critics are compelled to write about their subjects not because they derive pleasure looking at art or eating in restaurants, but because they are acutely cognizant that they are not as contented by those experiences as their compatriots. "People who don't actually enjoy eating are the ones with the attention to look around the room—where are people sitting? Who likes what?—and absorb both the abstract system of snob values and the social comedy of it," he writes. Gopnik's overly-aware, active mind has helped him produce some of the New Yorker's best criticism. And at his finest, his work can prove as compelling and memorable as Paris itself.

ALEXANDRA STARR *is a freelance writer in Washington, D.C.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Capitol Repair Kit



While Washington burns with partisan rhetoric, we cool the air with clear-headed, innovative solutions to some of the nation's most unyielding problems. And we have fun doing it. **The Washington Monthly** explores the quirks, cons, and paralysis that too often underpin American politics—then we offer a sensible way out. *The New York Observer* says we are the magazine "to which anyone who gives a damn about this country must subscribe."

"Pitiless ... indispensable ... with a critical wit and steel-trap reporting." —*The New York Times*

"We continue to find the *Monthly* an indispensable decoder and deconstructor of the men and myths governing our nation's capitol." —*The Nation*

*New subscribers only*

**SUBSCRIBE NOW AND SAVE!**

❑ YES! Enter my subscription for a full year (10 issues) to **The Washington Monthly** for only $29.95.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ___ Zip _____

❑ Payment enclosed ❑ Bill me later

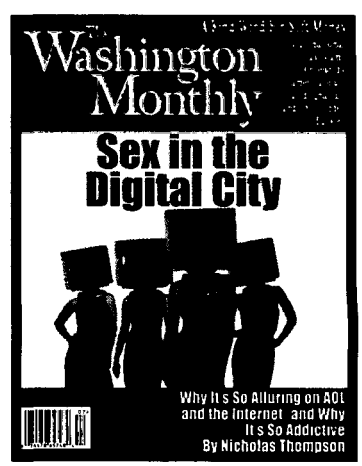
Charge my ❑ VISA ❑ MasterCard

Credit Card # _____ Exp. _____

**The Washington Monthly**
1611 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

For Canadian and other foreign subscriptions add $7. Please remit U.S. funds.

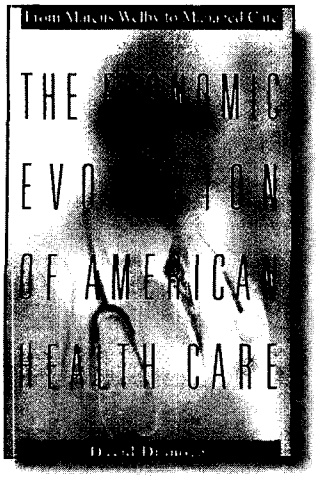
A01001





LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# NEW FROM PRINCETON



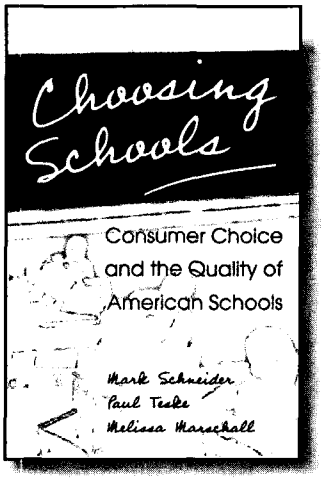

## The Economic Evolution of American Health Care

From Marcus Welby to Managed Care

**David Dranove**

The American health care industry has undergone such dizzying transformations since the 1960s that many patients have lost confidence in a system they find too impersonal and ineffectual. Is their distrust justified? Can their confidence be restored? David Dranove, a leading health care economist, tackles these and other key questions in this first major economic and historical investigation of the modern medical health care system.

Cloth $27.95 ISBN 0-691-00693-8 *Due November*




## Choosing Schools

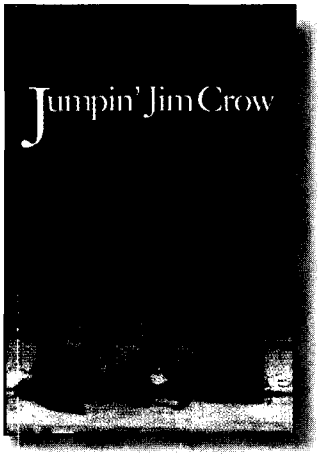
Consumer Choice and the Quality of American Schools

**Mark Schneider, Paul Teske, and Melissa Marschall**

In debating the feasibility of school choice, analysts have focused primarily on schools as suppliers of education, but an important question remains: Will parents be able to function as "smart consumers" on behalf of their children?

Here a highly respected team of social scientists provides extensive evidence on how parents currently do make these choices. Drawn from four different types of school districts, their findings not only stress the importance of parental decision-making and involvement to school performance but also clarify the issues of school choice in ways that bring much-needed balance to the ongoing debate.

Cloth $35.00 ISBN 0-691-05057-0




## Jumpin' Jim Crow

Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights

**Edited by Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon**

The form of segregation and subjection nicknamed Jim Crow constantly remade itself over time. Here, some of the most innovative scholars of southern history question Jim Crow's sway, evolution, and methods over the course of a century.

"Focusing on the role of African Americans, dissident whites, and especially black and white women, these essays help explain how the most progressive of reform movements, the Civil Rights Movement, came out of what has been viewed by too many for too long as the 'backward' South."—Vernon Burton

Paper $17.95 ISBN 0-691-00193-6 Cloth $55.00 ISBN 0-691-00192-8 *Due November*

Princeton University Press 800-777-4726 • WWW.PUP.PRINCETON.EDU

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED